THE FORUM
FOR MAY 1916

THREE POEMS

EDNA ST. VINCENT MILLAY

IF YOU WERE DEAD

IF I should learn in some quite casual way
That you were gone, not to return again—
Read from the back-page of a paper, say,
Held by a neighbor in a subway train,
How at the corner of this avenue
And such a street (so are the papers filled)
A hurrying man—who happened to be you—
At noon to-day had happened to be killed,
I should not cry aloud—I could not cry
Aloud, or wring my hands in such a place—
I should but watch the station lights rush by
With a more careful interest on my face,
Or raise my eyes and read with greater care
Where to store furs and how to treat the hair.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BLUE-BEARD

This door you might not open, and you did;
So enter now, and see for what slight thing
You are betrayed. . . . Here is no treasure hid,
No cauldron, no clear crystal mirroring
The sought-for truth, no heads of women slain
For greed like yours, no writhings of distress,
But only what you see. . . . Look yet again—
An empty room, cobwebbed and comfortless.
Yet this alone out of my life I kept
Unto myself, lest any know me quite;
And you did so profane me when you crept
Unto the threshold of this room to-night
That I must never more behold your face.
This now is yours. I seek another place.

WITCH-WIFE

She is neither pink nor pale,
And she never will be all mine;
She learned her hands in a fairy-tale,
And her mouth on a valentine.

She has more hair than she needs;
In the sun 'tis a woe to me!
And her voice is a string of colored beads,
Or steps leading into the sea.

She loves me all that she can,
And her ways to my ways resign;
But she was not made for any man,
And she never will be all mine.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE CONSCIENCE OF GERMANY

WILLARD HUNTINGTON WRIGHT

DESPITE the American people's reputation for commercialism, we are influenced almost not at all by monetary considerations when called upon to render a decision on the justice or injustice, the right or wrong, of an important question. We arrive at our decisions through ethical and moral processes almost entirely unrelated to immediacy and expediency. In this respect we are not a cold-blooded or even a hard-headed nation. To the contrary, we are sentimentalists; that is, we sacrifice our material welfare to a preconceived belief in some particular code of conduct. In reaching our conclusions we ask of a given action, not would it benefit us financially and work out for the best material results, but is it right or wrong, moral or immoral, according to the dictates of our predetermined ethical system. In this almost quixotic attitude lie both our strength and our weakness. On the one hand, it furnishes us with solidarity and power and builds up our racial character along the lines of idealistic aspiration. But, on the other hand, it tends to narrow our outlook, to steep us in a false contentment, and to blind us to a broader vision of the truth.

This point of view accounts in large measure for the general lack of sympathy which characterizes the American in his attitude toward Germany during the present war. He attempts to judge the German nation by his own standard of conduct, and when he discovers that the German conception of life apparently disagrees with his own, he forthwith repudiates it. He is not willing to admit the possibility of there being any true ethical standard save the one he himself lives by. He frowns at the notion that two different sets of conditions necessitate two different methods of dealing with them. Furthermore, he believes that he sees in the Allied nations the governing ethical code which corresponds to his own, and he at once unleashes his sympathy in their behalf. Thus it is that the American has thrown his moral support to the side of France and England.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

His attitude is sincere, and is the outgrowth of temperamental promptings. It is wholly psychological. It has been influenced by neither radical grievances nor a desire for benefit.

Conditions, of course, have had much to do with paving the way for the Americans' present state of mind. The Allies' propagandists have exhibited a far deeper insight into American psychology than have the German defenders; and, in addition, they have had—especially in the case of England—a far more intimate method of approach. Again, the spokesmen of Germany have in many instances fallen into the same error that the American has been guilty of in regard to Germany—namely, they have assumed that our ethical premises and theirs were identical, and that all that was necessary to bring the two nations together was a logical syllogism emanating from those premises. What was needed, however, was not logic, but a clearer understanding of the fundamental differences on which the consciences of the two nations rested. America and Germany have been at cross-purposes because they each started arguing from a radically different standpoint. This was not true in the case of England and America, and for that reason we were able to follow and agree with the reasons and explanations which were put forth to justify the Allies' cause.

Now, in order to bridge the temperamental gulf which lies between this country and Germany, there must be a deeper mutual understanding of the motivating racial factors of the two nations. I spent more than a year in the belligerent countries after the outbreak of the war, and I thoroughly believe that it is our ignorance of German conditions and ideals which accounts for our antagonism toward her. I was astonished on returning to America to find so little "literature" adequately setting forth the German cause. Most of what there was failed to touch the mainsprings of difference between us and the Central Powers. It was in large measure desultory, unauthentic and without the appeal which would have made it acceptable to the American public. I realized, of course, that the Allies had a distinct advantage so far as means of communication went, and that it was difficult for the Germans in Europe to make an adequate and immediate defense of many of their acts which were

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

distasteful to the people of this country. Although I had never lived in Germany, but had made my home in France and England, I knew far more of the governing principles of the Teutonic temperament than was even guessed by the great majority of the American public; and knowing and understanding these principles, I was far more lenient in my feeling toward Germany than if I had been ignorant of them.

The American boasts of his fair-mindedness, of his ability to mete out exact justice when confronted by the necessity of making a decision. Yet withal, he is hasty and inclined to leap at conclusions. And I have reasons for believing that, in the case of Germany, we have not adequately weighed the evidence. We have let our emotions guide us unduly. We have given insufficient study to the German point of view. As a result, we have failed to live up to our own ideal of justice. We have not stopped to consider, for instance, that no great body of people such as the German nation—a nation which has contributed much to the enlightenment of the human race, philosophically, educationally, scientifically and æsthetically—could believe unanimously in the righteousness of their cause without there being some powerful reason for such solidarity of sentiment. Every man and woman of that nation could not be completely blinded to all that is decent, high-minded and noble. Mere patriotism or love of a ruler could not alter overnight the character of sixty-five million highly civilized people, and make of them ruthless and conscienceless fanatics. And yet that is what we inferentially assume when we unqualifiedly condemn the Germans in the present struggle.

The true cause of Germany's unanimous self-justification must be sought in the ideals which went into the making of her historical, cultural and social foundation, for, in order to judge any nation fairly, that nation's basic aspirations must be studied in relation to the conditions under which it evolved. What we have needed most has been a complete and authoritative method of approach to the Teutonic conception of life and growth—a means whereby we could look beneath the surface of racial effects and glimpse the causes underneath—a comprehensive source of knowledge from which could be obtained an under-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

standing of those manifestations of Germanic conduct and culture which, unillumined by explanation, seem to us incomprehensible and, in many cases, blameworthy. Our present lack of understanding has tinctured and colored our judgment, and has stamped us with a characteristic which we, as Americans, would instinctively be ashamed of—namely, with injustice.

Now, however, we are in possession of an excellent guide to the German mind and outlook—a guide which, once it is studied, cannot fail to alter, in some measure at least, our attitude toward the Germanic powers. It is exactly the sort of book that will give us a clearer insight into the spirit which animates and governs the German peoples, and that will enable us to appraise justly and without bias the many aspects of Teutonic thought. The book was originally published in Germany in 1915 and bore the title, *Deutschland und der Weltkrieg;* but this name failed to indicate the full scope of its subject-matter, and in the American translation the title adopted is *Modern Germany.* It is a serious and scholarly effort to elucidate all the phases of German life and ideals; to set before the world a precise picture of the struggles, both physical and intellectual, through which the Central Empires have developed; to clarify the psychological and ethical promptings which have formulated German *Kultur;* and to explain the true relation which Germany, in all branches of her evolution, bears to the rest of the world.

The manner and method of the book could hardly be improved upon. It is not the statement of one man, or the result of one man's research and study, but a series of papers, each dealing with some specific national question, and each written by the highest authority in his field. The volume, however, is not lacking in homogeneity. It has the merit of a single purpose, and, in addition, possesses the combined authority of many skilled and specialized minds. Every essay sums up the life knowledge of a student who has devoted his time and energies to mastering the subject on which he writes. All the contributors, with two exceptions, both government officers, are professors in the Universities of Germany and Austria. No more competent and authentic spokesmen of modern Germany could be obtained.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In *Modern Germany* there has been no conscious attempt made to "justify" Germany's many activities—that is to say, these writers are not propagandists attempting to gain sympathy or to harmonize German ideals with those of the rest of the world. They are primarily scholars whose aim has been pure exposition. So many misinterpretations had been put on Germany, due to fundamental misunderstandings and a lack of appreciative knowledge, that the leaders of modern German thought felt it an obligation to set down honestly and calmly a series of explanatory documents in which would be discussed the social, industrial, philosophical, economic, political, cultural, scientific and ethical character of the nation; and *Modern Germany* is the result. The book is not an official document, however; it is a private enterprise, despite the fact that it contains the highest stamp of German intellectual approval. It was not originally intended for this country, but its importance to us is nevertheless very great, because it presents us, for the first time in English, with a comprehensive basis on which to found our judgment of a great people.

Perhaps the chief value of *Modern Germany* to America lies in its first and last divisions which are sub-titled "Germany's Position in the World" and "The Spirit of the War." Under the first of these sub-titles are chapters discussing Germany's historical-political growth in relation to the world powers, the spirit of German *Kultur,* Germany's international economic position, her colonial policy, her military system, the origin and nature of her institutions, and her spirit of self-government. Under the second sub-title are chapters dealing with *Kultur,* the policy of power and militarism, the question of international law, and the meaning of the war in relation to German anticipations. To these divisions every American, who wishes to be just in his decisions, should turn. Here he will find much light thrown upon those moot questions which inevitably arise in any serious discussion relating to the relative merits and demerits of the belligerents' policies. On account of the common language existing between our nation and England we have become familiar with the English viewpoint, and this familiarity has led us into the error of regarding the rest of the world

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

through Great Britain's eyes. But, to understand a nation's mental and spiritual outlook which differs from ours, we should —in common justice even to ourselves—consider the environment in which that nation has sprung up.

Professor Otto Hintze explains for us in the opening essay of the present book the diametrically opposed conditions under which Germany and England have worked out their national destinies; and he has set down the political necessities which have sprung from Germany's particular geographical situation. The life conditions of the two nations being different, it follows that the bases on which their national existence rests must necessarily differ. England, isolated by the sea, is not menaced by powerful adjoining states in which a sudden outburst of enmity might result in serious danger. Whereas such countries as England and America have been free to devote their political energies to commercial or internal advancement, Germany has been forced into what Professor Hintze calls politico-military competition. Even France and Russia are not threatened on certain important borderlines: they possess unassailable outlets which permit of activities denied Germany. Germany's central geographical position affects not only her commercial and political life, but her intellectual life as well. Necessarily there have grown up at the base of German thought certain traditions which do not harmonize with those of nations differently situated. The question is a complicated one, but we should at least try to grasp its essential factors before attempting a solution.

The question of a nation's culture is even more complex, and requires considerable understanding of the various elements which have gone into its making. What the English-speaking world has come to term as German *Kultur* is not at all what the German means when he uses the word. The American's deepest ignorance of Germany lies in this much-discussed and much-abused *Kultur*. We assume, with provincial naïeveté, that culture is an idealistic ethic wholly unrelated to circumstances—something which it is possible to superimpose on national character. We cannot understand why Germany cannot fit our codes to her own national existence. We ignore all the facts of history which should have taught us that both morality and ethics

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

are the result of conditions. The Jews and Dionysian Greeks, for instance, differed in their morality because the bases of their national existence were dissimilar. In the very nature of things, it would have been impossible for Germany to develop under an ethical system which would have been equally efficacious for England or America; and the well-informed man is not one who judges the culture of one nation by the needs of another.

Scarcely any two European nations have been met with the same problems of growth, with the result that these multifarious conditions have created decided differences in the matter of *Kultur*. Furthermore, we must take into consideration differences of thought, feeling, character, traditions, historical and political progress; the many phases of internal and external life; the fortunes and misfortunes which have accompanied development; and the interrelations of all these integers. In short, unless we are content to assume that the *entire German nation* is depraved, vicious, dishonorable and barbaric, we must judge its *Kultur* by the many manifestations of its life as a whole—by all the material and spiritual elements which have gone into its making. And once we have understood the elements which have determined the Germanic spirit, we will be in a position to gauge truthfully the status of German *Kultur*. In *Modern Germany* will be found an unusually clear and full discussion of the cultural problems of the European nations, with special emphasis placed on the spirit of German *Kultur*.

The all-absorbing problem which confronts the American people to-day is that of self-government. We are deeply concerned with our political institutions and the manner in which the democratic will can be developed and put into operation. We have come to a point where we pride ourselves on our democracy and exhibit scorn toward nations that would seem to be tyrannized by a dominating minority. Erroneously we believe that democracy may be learned like a lesson, and that those nations whose governments do not superficially accord with ours are more autocratic than we. But we often mistake the form for the substance, and are led into serious error. The American, for instance, believes that the German people are dominated by a ruthless bureaucracy whose slogan is *Verboten*. But

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

here again our lack of true information and knowledge has reversed the truth for us. The modern German is more truly a self-governing entity than is the American. He has greater personal freedom than has the citizen of this country; and the individuals—especially those of the working classes—are better protected in Germany than here. The average American will find it hard to believe these things. Yet, if he will for a moment take the trouble to study the real status of German citizenship, he will discover for himself the accuracy of these statements. In *Modern Germany* Professor Gustav von Schmoller has explained the origin and nature of German institutions; and Dr. Hans Luther has set forth the spirit of German citizenship and has recorded its achievements in self-government. In these two treatises lie valuable lessons for us as a democratic nation.

A large part of the matter in *Modern Germany* touches either directly or indirectly on Germany's relation to the great war. But here there is no transient matter of a superficial nature. Neither is there rancor nor an inclination to belittle the motives of the Allies. The entire book is calm and judicial in character, its one purpose being to give a psychological and historical analysis of the underlying facts of the conflict. The volume is, in fact, the first complete and scholarly interpretation of modern Germany which has come to us since the outbreak of hostilities. We have had many adequate interpretations of the Allies' relation to the great war, and because they have reached us first, and because of their availability, we have formed a biased opinion of the contestants. Everyone who respects justice, however, owes it to himself as well as to Germany to learn the truth from every angle. Thus far we have, to a great extent, formed our opinions on one-sided evidence. But America need no longer be in ignorance. When I advise the reading of *Modern Germany* it is not necessarily with the idea of converting America to the German cause. Perhaps the dictates of our temperament would never permit us to feel complete sympathy with Teutonic aspirations; but surely before we make a decision and condemn a nation as great as Germany, we should be sure that we are guided by intellectual processes and not merely by passions arising out of ignorance.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE MAGICAL CITY

(*Broadway Legend*)

A ONE-ACT PLAY IN FREE VERSE

ZOË AKINS

THE PERSONS

PETRONELLE,	*The girl.*
DAVID BROOKS,	*A poet.*
RUDOLPH PHILLIPS,	*A rich man.*
LOUISE,	*A maid.*
TOM PHILLIPS,	*Rudolph's brother.*
BILL D'ARCY,	
A HOTEL CLERK,	
A WATCHMAN,	
A DOCTOR,	

Time and place: Today, New York

From the wide windows of a dim luxurious room high up in a great hotel one may see the magical city of Gotham—asleep. Midnight is long past; and the stars of the sky seem closer at hand than the field of stars below.

Within the room itself there is that conspicuous richness and comfort that money buys so readily in New York; yet here there is an integrity of taste that places this sitting room apart from those that are to be had by the day or month from the hotel clerk. . . . An authoritative mind has mixed these colors,—rising as they do to strong chords of blue and gold; arranged for spaciousness amid the beautiful furnishings, hung the two fine landscapes on the wall, and set, in just the right places, two marbles—one old, one modern—and the agreeable bronzes. . . . On a long table a high silver lamp bears a golden shade for its flame, and there is no other light except far back in the room by the window the shadowy illumination of an electric torch that wears the look of a flower. By this one may see—but wait. . . .

A yellow lily, blooming above its great spotted leaves, stands on the table within the focus of the strong central light from the high lamp; and also shining softly in this zone of soft radiance is a couch, simple in design, but of such a color of blue, and of such a texture of velvet that no living queen—or dead—could have found it unfit for her repose. . . . And by the window

Copyright, 1916, by Zoë Akins. All dramatic and other rights reserved.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

one may see the crouched figure of a boy who has fallen asleep, waiting. His head is fine, his face and the hand upon which it rests, remarkable in delicacy. He is older than he looks, for the boyishness of his attitude and his slight figure indicate a mere youth,—not a man of twenty-five, as he, David Brooks, really is. . . . His clothes are shabby, but he has done his best to look well, and he has managed very nicely. . . .

A clock strikes two. . . . The door at the right opens and Petronelle comes in. She is a golden girl in her long golden cloak,—with her golden hair uncovered,—a golden girl, rather wistful, with fascinating little ways, a charming voice,—and that seems to be all. . . . Her maid, Louise, enters at once from a door opposite. Louise is plain and neat and thin and getting old. She is shrewd and cautious. . . . Petronelle is the only person she has ever loved.

PETRONELLE

(*Seeing David asleep*)
How long?

LOUISE

Since ten.

PETRONELLE

Poor boy!
(*She flings her cloak into Louise's waiting hands.*
Take this
And then come back
And get me out of this. . . .
(*She shrugs at her gown.*
Here, do it now.
(*Louise unhooks the tight little gown.*

PETRONELLE

Ye Gods! I'm tired!
Get me a night-gown
And that purple thing
With fur;
I'm cold. . . .
Hurry, Louise. . . .

LOUISE

Yes, child.
(*She is finishing with the dress as Petronelle continues to talk—nervously, with a certain frightened elation.*

PETRONELLE

What do you think, Louise?
Can you guess
Whom I have seen to-night?
(*Louise pauses sharply in her task at the question and the note of excitement in Petronelle's voice.*

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LOUISE

Not . . . him?

PETRONELLE

(*Looking towards David to reassure herself that he is asleep, and lowering her voice*)

Yes . . . him. . . .

(*Her eyes widen, and her voice thrills as she repeats the word.*

Yes . . . him. . . .

LOUISE

(*Shocked unpleasantly*)

Good God! Not . . . him. . . .

PETRONELLE

Yes . . . him. . . .

Rudolph.

LOUISE

Oh, child!

PETRONELLE

(*Assuming nonchalance*)

Oh, well,

Don't bother;

It's over. . . .

I guess it's over.

(*Louise resumes her task, and unknots a sash,—but before she slips the gown from Petronelle's shoulders, she pauses to ask her question.*

LOUISE

Well if it is not

What are you going to do

(*Nodding towards David*)

With him?

PETRONELLE

(*Shrugging*)

Who knows?

(*Her dress slips from her shoulders and she steps buoyantly out of the circle that it makes around her feet. Louise quickly picks it up and shakes from it any possible dust. Undressed, Petronelle, in her knickerbockers of yellow crêpe, looks like a little boy.*

PETRONELLE

(*With relief*)

Thank heaven!

(*Louise goes into the room at the left taking Petronelle's things. Petronelle herself goes to the table, lights a cigarette, and then flings herself, face down, on the couch. She smokes and jerks about restlessly,—but some thought, quieting and sweet, keeps her, now and then, for an instant still.*

LOUISE

(*Appearing in the doorway*)

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Hadn't you better come
And let me undress you right?

PETRONELLE

(*Refusing*)
Ump. . . . Ump. . . .
I don't want
My face washed,
Or my hair brushed,
Or anything.
Just bring me something
To put on now;
Then go to bed.

LOUISE

Oh, very well.

(*She goes out, not very pleasantly, and returns almost immediately with a garment of ivory velvet that in spite of its sable trimmings looks like a monk's cowl.*

LOUISE

(*Coming beside the couch*)
Here—
This is warm.

(*Petronelle rises and Louise wraps her in the robe. As the maid kneels down to fasten it at the bottom, and to tie the cord about the waist, Petronelle slips her arm about her neck.*

PETRONELLE

Oh, Louie,
Suppose that he came back!
I'd be afraid—

LOUISE

(*Interrupting*)
Now, child, brace up.
He's not going to hurt you.
What could he do?
For he's too big a man to act
Like some drunk dago.
He's not a nigger with a razor
Ready to slash a girl
That's done with him.

PETRONELLE

I'm not afraid
That way.

(*Louise rises and glances in the direction of the window.*

LOUISE

You don't mean . . . ?

PETRONELLE

David?

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Of course not.
David is like a child
Who lets his toys
Be taken from him
Without a tear.
No, Louie,
I am just afraid;
I don't know why, exactly.

(She throws herself down moodily on the couch. Louise stands by her anxiously.

LOUISE

You know I'm with you, child.
I'll always stand by you
Whatever happens,
And lie—like I have lied,
And watch—like I have watched,
And never let nobody buy me off.

PETRONELLE

I know, I know.
You've been a wonder.
And I'm a devil
Sometimes.

LOUISE

Well if you are,
You're never mean to me.
It's interesting, too,
To be around
And watch you get your way with men
But take it from me, kiddo,
You're going to go too far some day,
And something's going to break. . . .

(A pause. Louise continues more hesitantly and respectfully)

You always seem to listen
To my advice,
And if you listen now,
You'll never see that man again.

PETRONELLE

(Weakly)

I won't—if I can help it.

LOUISE

Oh yes, you will.

PETRONELLE

(Sitting up straight, and speaking decisively, but with wistfulness)

No, we're done. . . . He said:
"Someday, I'll go,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

And then you'll know
I've gone for good.
When I am done, I'm done. . . ."
Why, even my allowance
Would stop, he said,
If I annoyed him
Or tried to get him back.
He paid me off
Before . . . not after
He was tired.
And every month
My money's there,
And for a year now
It's the only sign
I've had that he's alive.
Of course he's done with me;
He always meant
Whatever he said.

LOUISE

I think
He thought
His money would keep you tied
To him; and he
Could come back
When he liked.

PETRONELLE

No . . . he said he didn't care
What happened
After he had gone.
I might get married,
He said, even,—
Anything;
But I would have
My money every month as long
As he heard nothing from me.
"You're not the girl," he said,
"That I'd expect
To try a trick on me,—
Not *now*,—you're not that kind,
But if you ever do,
You'll see what happens."
I guess he was afraid
I'd try to hold him up
Sometime,—or get him back

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

And try to marry him. . . .
I won't. He's fixed me.
He is through.
(*Anger touches her voice and she looks suddenly towards David.*
And so am I;
I am in love with David.

LOUISE

That's well enough to say;
But you know well you're not.
And once that man
Who was the only one
That ever made you guess
Comes back. . . .
Watch out!

PETRONELLE

He's stayed away too long;
He won't come back. . . .

LOUISE

But didn't he come to-night?

PETRONELLE

I saw him at the supper
Bill D'Arcy gave.
He was there. . . .
Not noticing the other girls at all,
But looking now and then at me,
Though that means nothing. . . .
Louise, can it be really true
That he has never loved
Another woman . . . ?
He swore once that he never had.

LOUISE

What do you care?

PETRONELLE

I don't. . . .

LOUISE

Maybe he has,
And maybe he hasn't;
But I know this,—
There was something crazy
In the way he felt towards you.
And you are such a silly baby
You liked it. . . .
But he didn't.
He's not a man

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

That likes to lose his head—
And he won't do it
If he can help it. . . .
He thought more, all the time,
Of his millionaire friends,
And his big business,
And his grown children,
And his . . . wife,
Than he did of you.

PETRONELLE

Oh, I don't know. . . .

LOUISE

Oh yes, he did;
And when he got afraid,—
Afraid of you,
And afraid
Of what the town was saying,
He quit you cold.
Now, for God's sake—
If ever he comes back,
Turn him down cold. . . .
Stick to the boy,—
He's not a rotter
Like a lot of men
Who will only pull
A girl down.
He really loves you.
Stick to him.

PETRONELLE

I mean to. . . .
Of course. . . .

LOUISE

That's right.
And some day you'll be playing parts
In a real show,
And get to be
A great actress, maybe.

PETRONELLE

I wonder if great actresses
Long ago, when they were girls
Had everything taken out of their hearts,
Like me?
And if their lives

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Were so many empty rooms,
Like mine?

(Louise doesn't quite understand, but she is vaguely sympathetic.

LOUISE

Of course, dearie. . . .
And now,
Don't be afraid of nothing;
Your money won't stop
As long as you stick by your bargain;
And if you treat him cold,
He will really thank you,
And know you are not a fool,
Like some girls,
After all.

PETRONELLE

Yes, yes. I know.
That's how I mean to act.
I'll never give him the chance
To quit me again.

(She rises suddenly; changing the subject abruptly.

And now I'll waken David.
And send him home—
I'm tired. . . .
And you go to bed,
Louise.

LOUISE

All right, dearie.

PETRONELLE

Kiss me good-night.

(Louise kisses her a little timidly.

LOUISE

There now!
My baby's going to be good,
Isn't she?

PETRONELLE

Yes, Louie.
Very good,
Very wise.
Good-night.

(Louise, somewhat relieved, goes out into the room at the left. Petronelle goes to David and slips her arm under his head. As he awakens slowly she regards him with curious respect. . . . To one who cares to look closely, there is evident in Petronelle's attitude a carelessness of physical caresses, an almost matter of fact naturalness in a physical intimacy, that is at variance with the reserve of her

DRURY COLLEGE LIBRARY
Springfield, Missouri
PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

spirit. It is easy for her to kiss the boy who awakens in her arms, although there is only tenderness in her eyes, and her voice is unstirred by any deeper or more violent feeling.

PETRONELLE

David . . . dear. . . .

DAVID

(*Awaking*)

Darling!

(*He kisses her. His passion for her is singularly grave; he is quite like the hero of an ancient—not a modern—legend, to whom Love and Death are Comrades,—bright and shadowy; but he is more wise than his heroes, for he lives in the magical city,—and has all sorts of practical things to think about, both for himself and his lady,—if they are to live at all.*

PETRONELLE

(*Teasing*)

And I've been here for hours—

Waiting for you to waken.

DAVID

Really?

Why didn't you call me?

(*He is very much awake now; with his arm about Petronelle, they move to the couch. . . .*

PETRONELLE

You looked so tired.

DAVID

I was tired . . .

And you . . . ?

Isn't it awfully late?

PETRONELLE

I guess it is.

(*She is too restless to sit quietly with him, and rises and moves about as she talks,—lighting a cigarette, only to throw it away presently.* (*Continuing*)

Bill D'Arcy gave a party

After the show.

I came away

Quite early;

But I am tired.

(*He does not answer at once and she continues with her news casually.*

Lucille and Fanny,

And some girls

I'd never met were there.

And six or seven men.

(*Again she pauses, and proceeds, although David is scarcely interested, and seems more happy to look at her than to listen to her.*

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

I suppose
They are there—still,
Drinking—drinking—drinking.
(*She shrugs, more bored than disgusted at the thought.*

DAVID

Let them stay.
I'm glad you didn't.

PETRONELLE

(*Restlessly*)
Do you know, David,
That one of the girls
Quite snubbed me,
Pretending
That she was offended at meeting
Such a terrible creature?
(*She smiles ironically.*
She's going to be married
Next month
To a little man who keeps
A magazine store.
Her little man
Wasn't there
To-night, but of course
She's very proper and careful now.
(*David frowns as he listens.*

PETRONELLE

(*A little uneasily, but with an attempt at airiness*)
You've been extremely polite
And never mentioned it, David,
But you know *my* scandal
Is particularly glaring.
From Broadway out to San Francisco
They've heard of me and . . .
Rudolph Phillips.
(*Soberly*)
When I go in a shop
They'll sell me anything,
Up to a million dollars' worth,
On credit,
Because they've heard of me . . .
And Rudolph Phillips.

DAVID

Don't talk
About these things
To-night, my dearest.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Come, sit beside me. . . .
Come, be quiet. . . .
(Petronelle slowly goes to him and lets him kiss her and hold her close to him in his arms. For an instant her head lies wearily on his shoulder; then she lifts it and begins to speak on the same subject.

PETRONELLE

Not that they ever saw me with him,
Nor anybody *knows* a thing,
Not that I ever mentioned
His very important name . . .
Oh no. . . .
My scandal
Is just one of those legends
That hang about the theatre,
And that won't die
Until I die,—or he,
And maybe, not then.

DAVID

Sweet, you know
I ask no questions
About the past.
I do not care. . . .
Or rather, I do care,
But I will not think back . . .
Of course I know the legend . . .
Of course I know that somehow
The little girl who came out of the slums,
Dancing to music from the hurdy-gurdies,
Found some quick hidden way
To all of this . . . this room,
As lovely as the chamber of a queen,
These pearls, this velvet robe,
These little satin slippers. . . .
Sweet, I know
But ask no questions
Of that quick hidden way.

PETRONELLE

(Quietly, relaxing a little)
The legend is true.
Those people
Up and down Broadway
Who have only seen me
On the stage in a chorus;
And all those people

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Between here and California
Who have never seen me . . .
Or him. . . .
All those little unknown people
Whom I shall never speak to
Or see,
Knew the legend
And told each other our secret
Before it had happened.
I saw him *one* time,
And not again
Until months after;
Yet they were saying
Even then, of me
And a man I scarcely knew,
What afterwards happened.
Perhaps their thinking it,
And saying it,
Made it happen.
(*A little pause*)
Don't you care, David?
Don't you care?

DAVID

I only know I envy
The marvellously long arms
Of some one
Who lifted you so high
And set you here,
Far up, to be a star,
A little child of the moon,
Who has flung to me—
The gods know why—
A wonderful moon flower.

PETRONELLE

(*With much tenderness*)
How different you are,
With your wonderful words,
David,
From every one else
I have ever known!

DAVID

Different?
No, only humble.
There is nothing

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A poor poet
May give your beauty
To make it fairer,—
Not even a satin slipper,
Not a pillow even
For your golden head.

PETRONELLE

You hurt me
With your beautiful nonsense.
(*Suddenly she draws him closer as if, all at once, he has become very dear to her, and speaks rapidly—almost violently.*
David!
Dear,
Take me away,
Far away!
I shall have
Enough money,
For us both, always.
I need you!
I am afraid!
Take me away
If you love me!

DAVID

(*A little rigidly*)
A poor poet, sweet,
May be unable to give,
His love a little fan,
Even.
But at least
He can take from her
No more than the touch
Of her lips,
Or the wine
Of her words.

PETRONELLE

You are silly
And cruel!

DAVID

One who is proud
Is silly and cruel always.
You must forgive me.
(*He kisses her hands, but is unrelenting. She at once gives up her dream of flight, and as usual, dismisses her emotion with a little shrug. . . . She changes the subject.*

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

PETRONELLE
(*Easily and casually*)
What have you done
Since I saw you?
Have you written a poem?

DAVID
No.

PETRONELLE
Then what?

DAVID
You arrange my life
With your kisses.
I have only waited
To see you again. . . .

PETRONELLE
(*Ironically*)
But you would not care
To take me away
And arrange *my* life
With *your* kisses?

DAVID
Petronelle, you
Are a golden fairy
Whose enchanted palace
Is Gotham. . . .
And here in the Magical City,
On the vine at its casement windows
Blooming at dusk,
Love like a moon-flower blows,
Whiter against the dark
Than lilies in sun-lit gardens,
In the green and quiet country.
Do not be afraid
Of the Magical City,
Petronelle;
From its hovering shadows
Our deeds,
Our loves,
Our dreams,
Burst with the aspect of flowers,
Starry against the night.
Here you belong; here you must stay.

PETRONELLE
And you . . . David?

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

DAVID

And I . . . ?
I am one of the candle flames
Guttering in the dark
Of Gotham.
There is nothing so splendid
Under the stars to me
As the Magical City
That I call home,
But where never a kinsman is,
Nor a thing of my own.

PETRONELLE

(*Slipping her hand into his*)
I am here.

DAVID

Yes, my magical one,
You are here;
You are part of the wonder
Of the clear high skies,
And the spear-like towers,
And the singing surge
Of the millions
Toward passion and power. . . .
I am glad that the fairies
Who stood at your birth
Made you lovely and simple,
And gave you the fate
Of Helen and Sapho,
And all the great ladies,
And passionate girls
Whose lyrical names
Have fallen like meteors
Through the turbulent night
Of legend and history.

PETRONELLE

I do not always understand you,
David . . . but . . .
(*As if more to herself than to him*)
With you,
I am more quiet
Than when I sleep.
I can shut out the world,
And stand with you
On a fairy shore

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Where your words take me;
And again
Feel as I did once
When the settlement ladies
Sent us poor youngsters
Into the country,
Down by the sea.
I had never seen
Even the park. . . .
I had made flowers
Since I was three,
In a dark room
With six other children.
I was not afraid,
As my sisters were,
When I saw the ocean
And the far stretches
Of country, all green,
And without houses.
I did not cry then.
I stood still, knowing
That life was not always
A dark room with cotton flowers
Waiting to be made. . . .
And sometimes, now,
I think you might,
If you would,
Take the world
From a dark room
And cotton flowers,
On your wonderful words,
To the sunlight and beauty
Of the other shore.

DAVID

Ah, Petronelle,
Why should I writhe forever
With the old pain of ambition?
Five years ago when I was twenty
I was Phaëton making ready
To drive Apollo's chariot, the sun. . . .
You do not understand, do you?
Well, let us say
I meant to set the world a-fire
And ride above it;

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

But no more. . . .
When I am dead
Some one may find my songs
And sing them . . . that is all. . . .
And I ask nothing else,
Not even you. . . .
Yet now I have you,
And I will take delight
In you,
And even in such lovely trifles
Belonging to you,
As this emerald ring,
This bit of fur. . . .
I will not ask
More of you than the drunkard
Asks of his wine,
When he holds the golden draught
Against his lips,
Content, and knowing
That yesterday was a dream,
And to-morrow
Is a seed in the wind. . . .
I have whipped back my thoughts
From regret and hope,
Until they lie
Like broken-spirited hounds
In sight of the lash. . . .
You have in me
No violent lover
Who will cling or kill
When you turn away;
The Magical City teaches her children much;
And takes much from them,
That they may be spared
Strength for mere living.
The old emotions springing with love and hate
Are luxuries that we do not keep.

PETRONELLE
You mean you do not let
Yourself be aroused
By such things as jealousy?
You mean you have learned
Never to fight?

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

DAVID

Yes . . . here in Gotham
Has arisen a philosophy
Not unlike that
The bronze-skinned children of the East
Wrested a thousand years ago
From their iron skies. . . .
What will be . . . will be. . . .
Let it be. . . .

PETRONELLE

No! David.
For we . . . can fight
And build, and change . . .
And take. . . .

DAVID

You, perhaps;
For you are strong
In your fashion,
And a woman. . . .
But not I. . . .
No, my sweet,
Be to me only as a wine
That drugs my soul with beauty,
And brings back
Illusions of the Pharaohs
And the kings,
Who, sick with life,
Drank the same draught as I. . . .
Kiss me. . . .

(She kisses him, and they are silent. A sudden knock at the door. Then before Petronelle can lift herself from David's arms Rudolph Phillips enters. He is strong looking, dark, and tall,—a man, perhaps fifty. A sudden and invincible decision has written its purpose in his eyes. He closes the door and bolts it. Petronelle rises at last. David sits quietly.

PETRONELLE

Rudolph!

(Rudolph turns from her to David, who still remains lying back against the cushions, almost impassive.

RUDOLPH

Who is this?

(Petronelle cannot answer.

DAVID

(*Quietly*)
Tell him, Petronelle.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

PETRONELLE

(*To Rudloph*)
You said. . . .

RUDOLPH

I said I didn't care
What happened . . . or what you did
After I'd gone.
Very well,
I'll not ask more.
Send him away.
I have come back.

(*He turns away and walks to the window, looking out studiously.*
(*David remains sitting.*
(*Petronelle can say nothing.*

DAVID

(*To Petronelle, presently*)
Come, dear,
And sit down.
Don't be afraid. . . .
I'll go if you tell me to. . . .
And this gentleman will do the same
If you ask it.
Come, sit here.

(*Petronelle mutely goes to the couch and cowers as she sits in a corner of it.*
(*Rudolph turns back from the window and comes down to them raging.*

RUDOLPH

(*To David*)
By God, get out!
Or I'll. . . .

(*He stops short and turns back to the window. A frenzy of impatience is hurling his thoughts and emotions about. Suddenly he pauses, strangely casual and calm, before a little bronze figure. An instant's pleasure sweeps over him as he turns to Petronelle.*

RUDOLPH

(*Indicating the bronze*)
This is new.

PETRONELLE

(*In a low voice*)
Yes.

RUDOLPH

It is good,
Only place it so.

(*He turns the statuette about, and regards it with gloomy satisfaction; then he turns back again to Petronelle and David, and advances toward them, without any effort to control his anger.*

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

RUDOLPH
(*To David*)
I don't know who you are
Or what your game is,
But I have had enough
Of you.
(*To Petronelle*)
Get rid of him!

DAVID
(*To Rudolph*)
Since it is apparent
That you are Rudolph Phillips,
And your game
Is Petronelle,
I will tell you
That I, your shabby rival,
Am David Brooks, a poet,
And my game
Is the same as yours;
But . . .
Since you are he
Whose long arms I have envied
Because they reached so far to her,
(*He rises*)
I can only say
Adieu to you both;
For she has sterner need
Of you than me.

RUDOLPH
(*Ironically*)
And I, who heard to-night
For the first time
Of her young poet,
Envied you your wings;
But I am glad to see
You are a practical young man,
After all!
And would not wish
Your odalisque to shiver
In the mean street beside you.

DAVID
(*Flushing*)
You and she and I . . .
We are all children
Of Gotham.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

You know. I know,
She knows
How hideous it is to shiver
In the Magical City's streets. . . .
Too soon
Each of us
Will pass from its marble floor
To a still place, far off.
Think of that . . . and never let
Her little hands
Be empty or cold
Until they are folded forever
Over her cold empty heart.

(Petronelle rises, seeing that he is going. Her voice is torn with pity and tenderness.

PETRONELLE

Oh, David! No!
No, David!
You are breaking my heart!

RUDOLPH

(More gently)
Wait!
Listen a minute,
Both of you.

(They turn to him. There are tears in Petronelle's eyes, but David is calm and proud. Rudolph faces them grimly.

RUDOLPH

(To David)
Once
I had this girl,
And I think she liked me.
She liked me too much,
And it frightened me.
I did not want her
Clinging about my life.
I wrenched myself free of her.
I told her good-bye,
For always.
I told her . . . to go where she chose . . .
To like whom she chose . . .
And as long
As I heard nothing from her
She should be paid
For her silence.
She kept to her bargain;

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

I'll keep to mine.
If she wants you, young man,
Let her say so,
And she will lose nothing.
If she wants you to go,
Let her say so,—
For I . . .
(*To Petronelle*)
I will go, if you say,
But if you say, I will stay. . . .
(*To David*)
If she wants you,
She will lose nothing,
But if she wants me,
She will gain nothing.
Am I fair; is she free
To decide?

DAVID
(*His heroic attitude lost in his amazement*)
Why are you
So generous to me?

RUDOLPH
Because
I will not
Run a race
With a man whose feet
Are shackled,
Nor strike a man
Whose arms are chained.
Come,
You are young,
And a poet;
I am getting old. . . .
Not very romantic. . . .

DAVID
(*Interrupting*)
But strong . . .
Strong as an iron girder
Of the Magical City!

RUDOLPH
(*To David*)
Well then—
Between you
With your wings
And your youth,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

And my strength
She must choose,—
But fairly, knowing
That she gains or loses
Nothing with her choice.
You and I
Run this race
Stripped to our hearts!
Naked, tonight,
We hunt in a wilderness!

DAVID

(*His excitement rises; he catches at the words.*
In a wilderness!
Yes!
And she
Is the beautiful thing
We would snare
In our traps!
Now!
For the first time
I say to her,
I say to you,
Petronelle,
Come . . .
Let me snare you!
Let me keep you!
No longer
Are we children
Of the Magical City,
Submissive and wise;
We are trappers
Who steal
Through the paths of the forest!
We are hunters!
We are beasts!
For you,
Petronelle,
We will spread our snares!
We will cast the net
Of our love
In the shining waters
Of your thoughts
And seek to entangle
Your body and soul.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

RUDOLPH

Petronelle,
Turn your face to the night,
Look away,
Go to the window
And look far out
At the dark
And the stars . . .
And then,
While we are silent,
Think of us both. . . . And then
Tell us,
With your face averted,
The name
Of the one
Who must stay. . . .

(Petronelle covers her eyes with her hands. She is trembling. David perceives it, and goes to her.

DAVID

You tremble!
Come, Petronelle,
(He leads her to the window.
Speak to the stars,
And ask them
To be kind
To him whom you send away.

(There is a pause. Petronelle stands at the window, staring out. She does not speak at once.

(Rudolph and David await her decision, each with unconcealed elation, although Rudolph shows traces of uncertainty and concern.

DAVID

(Murmuring as he waits)
Ah!
No more
My love
Is a dog
That is whipped
And cowed.
My hopes run as free
As the wild deer
In a forest. . . .
She is no more
The slave girl of Cæsar,
Nor I the beggar
At Cæsar's door.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Petronelle,
You are the empress to-night
Of Cæsar's fate
And of mine. . . .
Whom will you make
Mighty with love . . .
Whom will you send
Hopeless and bitter away?

RUDOLPH

Name,
Petronelle,
The one
Who shall stay.

(*There is a bare pause, then Petronelle, lifting her head, cries out a name.*

PETRONELLE

Rudolph!

RUDOLPH

(*Involuntarily, gladly*)
Ah!

(*He takes a step towards her as she swings around and waits for him, flushed and proud. David hears and sees unbelievingly, but he understands at last.*

DAVID

(*Loudly*)
No!

(*Petronelle remembers David, and hesitates as she is about to advance to Rudolph. Rudolph, too, pauses, amazed and disturbed.*

DAVID

(*Violently*)
No!
By God!
No!

(*There is a slight pause. Louise comes quietly and unheeded into the room, and stops, startled and uneasy, near the door.*

DAVID

No, I say!

LOUISE

(*Warningly, with a look toward the outer door.*
'Ssh . . . 'ssh! . . .

DAVID

(*Lowering his voice unconsciously, but still speaking with strained intensity*)
No! I tell you!
(*To Petronelle*)
Stand back!

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

(*To Rudolph*)
Don't touch her!

PETRONELLE
(*Appealingly*)
David!

DAVID
(*Violently*)
You liar!

RUDOLPH
(*To David*)
Take care!

DAVID
(*To Rudolph*)
Take care of what?
You ought to know
She's lying.
(*To Petronelle*)
Tell him you lied;
Tell him again
You love him . . .
If you dare!

PETRONELLE
(*Very quietly*)
It is true
I love him, David.
And I
Have loved him
A long time. . . .
Even when
I hated him.

(*She comes and stands beside Rudolph, who looks at her with great tenderness. He takes her hand and speaks gently,—making an effort to save the situation.*

RUDOLPH
My girl!
And now—
Let Louise
Put you to bed;
You're tired.

(*He looks toward David, who now has covered his face with his hands, and stands, trembling and beaten.*
(*Continuing*)
We'll both go now,—
That's best . . .
I'll telephone
In the morning;

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Good-night.

(He takes her hands and looks at her, but does not kiss her.

PETRONELLE

(Wistfully)

Good-night,
Rudolph.

(Suddenly she catches up his hand, and kisses it; then she turns quickly and starts for the door to the inner room, but turns back to David.

(Continuing pityingly)

And good-night, David.

(He does not answer.

(Continuing)

I'm sorry.

(A pause)

I cared for you
A lot, David.
Although to-night
You may not believe me.
I cared for you . . .
More than for any one . .
I ever knew . . .
Except Rudolph.

(Still he does not answer, but he lifts his head and stares at her miserably.

(Continuing)

You see, David,
I thought
That he had gone
For good. . . .

(Again she pauses, and then goes on with sudden and deep feeling.

Even to-night,
I begged you, David,
To take me away . . .
But you said
I belonged here. . . .
I cared for you . . .
Differently, David,
And I loved
Your poems. . . .
But *he's* come back,
And I thank God.

(Her voice breaks and she looks again at Rudolph. David takes a step towards her, pleadingly. He speaks in a shaken voice.

DAVID

Petronelle,
I wouldn't believe it

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

At first. . . .
But I see
That you believe him . . .
That you think
You love him.
(*He rages again.*
But I tell you
You don't!
It's all wrong!

PETRONELLE
(*Impatiently, with irony*)
Haven't you changed,—
Much,
Quite suddenly?
(*Quoting*)
"What will be,—will be,
Let it be. . . ."

DAVID
(*Somberly*)
What does the tree
Know of the lightning,
Until it is struck?

PETRONELLE
(*Using his words against him, as gently as possible*)
Let it be,
David;
Tell me good-night,
And go.

DAVID
(*Sullenly and ominously*)
I will tell you good-night,
Petronelle,
When he has told you
Good-night, forever.
(*To Rudolph*)
You should have let me go
Before.
I could have faced the night
Alone,—
Bearing in my heart
The dream of her love;
Brave with the thought
That I had killed
The wolf at her door.
You should have bought her from me,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

And I could have kept
My dream.
But you have taken
Both my dream and her.
You have been too cruel;
You would not let me go,
Possessing my dream—
And so,
I will be cruel too!

(He jerks from his pocket, suddenly, a revolver, and points it at Rudolph.

PETRONELLE

David!

(She stands like a stone woman whose lips have somehow uttered a cry of terror, but who can speak no more, nor move. Louise, too, in the back of the room, near the door, is transfixed with astonishment and fear. David is scarcely sane, but the hand holding the revolver, lifts, and lifts, and searches tremblingly but more surely for a perfect aim at Rudolph's heart. . . . Rudolph, alone, is calm and collected, realizing perfectly his danger, and preparing for the worst possible outcome.

RUDOLPH

(To Petronelle, quickly but easily)

Darling . . .
If this mad boy
Really can shoot . . .
Whatever happens,
Telephone at once
To my brother, George.
Tell him I said
To take good care
Of my girl . . .
And he will.
George is a brick . . .
Don't worry. . . .

LOUISE

(Suddenly able to speak)

God!

(Quick as lightning she pivots around and rushes into the next room. In an instant her voice is heard at the telephone.

Send some one quick!
The watchman, the clerk!—

DAVID

(Exulting)

They'll come too late!

(Petronelle now arouses herself and takes a step towards Rudolph, her eyes full of horror.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

DAVID

(*Continuing to Petronelle*)
Stand back,
Petronelle!
(*To Rudolph*)
I have carried this pistol
A long time,—
Thinking
When the world was too bitter,
And the wolf too close,
I would send a bullet
Through my brain. . . .
But the bullet meant
For your shabby rival
Sends you before him
Into the darkness!
Ah!
For you have taken my moon-flower
To wear
For a boutonnière
On the lapel of your coat!

PETRONELLE

David . . . !

(She starts forward to throw herself between him and Rudolph, but David has found his aim now, and supporting himself against the table, sobbing and trembling, he is ready to fire, even as he answers her.

DAVID

Stand back!

(He shoots . . . Rudolph flings up his arm, starts to turn to Petronelle,—and falls heavily. . . . David, satisfied, throws his revolver on the table, and half giggling, half sobbing, lights a cigarette, and then flings himself into the farthest chair, staring as if in a dream at the dying man, and Petronelle on her knees beside him. . . . Louise, who has come back, takes the revolver from the table by stealth, and watches David.

PETRONELLE

(*To Rudolph, as she lifts him toward her*)
Rudolph!
Dearest!
O, God!
What has happened?
Rudolph!

RUDOLPH

(*Opening his eyes, and fighting for strength to speak*)

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

He . . . he got me. . . .
I think . . . I'm done for. . . .

PETRONELLE

(*Desperately*)
Louise! Louise!

LOUISE

(*Still watching David, but pouring out some brandy in a glass at a side table as she speaks*)
They're coming up
From downstairs.
I telephoned, too,
To his brother,
And to Mr. D'Arcy. . . .
He's bringing a doctor,—
One of his friends
That was there at his party.
They're coming right down.

PETRONELLE

O, God! If they'd hurry!
O, Louise! O, Louise!

RUDOLPH

(*Weakly, trying to smile*)
She's a wonder . . .
That girl. . . .
Call her . . . closer. . . .

PETRONELLE

Come here, Louise!
He wants you.
(*Louise still watching David, kneels beside Petronelle, offering the brandy to Rudolph.*

LOUISE

Drink this, Mr. Phillips,—
It's a drop of brandy
To keep your strength up
Till the doctor comes.

RUDOLPH

(*Making the effort to swallow it*)
Thanks, Louise. . . .
Take care of the girl
For me.
You're all she's got.
There's money in my overcoat pocket—
Take it for your . . .
Last tip . . . from me. . . .
(*He breaks off weakly, but continues in an instant.*

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Louise. . . .
Will you . . . take care . . .
Of her?

LOUISE

(Feelingly, as Petronelle's whole body is shaken by a storm of sobbing)
Oh yes, sir,
That I will,
Mr. Phillips,—
Don't you worry,
Don't bother
About that money.
(She rises quickly, to get away from her emotion.
(Continuing)
I'm going to telephone
And see why no one's come.
(Revolver in hand, she goes to David, and touches him on his arm.
(To David)
You come with me.
(David, startled, rises from his chair, and obeys mechanically, even imitating her attempt at noiselessness by tip-toeing after her as she leads the way to the inner room. At the door David draws back, seizes her arm, and shudders.

DAVID

(Whispering to Louise)
Did I . . . kill him?

LOUISE

(Sternly, unresponsive)
You come in here.
(She stands back and he passes into the inner room in front of her; she follows, closing the door almost shut behind her.

PETRONELLE

(Making a valiant effort to control her grief)
Rudolph!
Don't leave me!
You've just come back!

RUDOLPH

Lift me . . . higher . . .
There. . . .
I'm all in, darling.
I've got to go. . . .
Lean down. . . .
(She bends closer over him; he can only whisper now.
I guess
That this is love,
All right. . . .
(His voice growing stronger)
And a damned big love,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Sweetheart . . .
Isn't . . . it . . . ?
(*He relaxes and lies heavy in her arms.*

PETRONELLE

Yes, yes. . . .
It's love . . . love . . .

RUDOLPH

I want to say . . .
It's worth . . .
All it costs . . .
Sweet. . . .
I'm . . . not . . . sorry. . . .

PETRONELLE

O, God!
Don't let him die!
Don't let him die!

RUDOLPH

(*A great sigh goes through his body.*
Hold me close . . .
And kiss me sweet . . .

PETRONELLE

(*As she lifts her face from his*)
The whole world's falling in. . . .
O, God . . .
You won't let him die!

RUDOLPH

(*Making an effort to stroke her hand*)
Sweet . . .
Don't cry. . . .
I can just see you, now,
Bending your golden head
Over the stream
Where I left you. . . .

PETRONELLE

Don't let him die!
O, God!

RUDOLPH

Sweet . . .
They're ringing the bells,
And spreading the sails;
Good-bye . . . dear girl. . . .

PETRONELLE

Rudolph!

RUDOLPH

It's going

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

To be . . .
A smooth crossing.

(She clings to him desperately; he lifts his hand a little towards her arm, but cannot reach it.

PETRONELLE

(Her voice a low wail)
Ah, no, no, no!

RUDOLPH

(Murmuring almost dreamily)
Hush, darling. . . .
Peace . . . peace . . . at last . . .
In your arms. . . .

(Suddenly his head falls back against her shoulder; and a sob of terror shakes her as Death goes through his body.

PETRONELLE

(Her words an almost inarticulate scream)
Ah . . . h!
No!

(Louise enters quickly, and sees what has happened. She goes to Petronelle, who laments no more but sits as if frozen with grief. Louise kneels by her, trying to comfort her.

LOUISE

Poor baby!
Louie's baby!
Come, dearie,
Come with Louie.

(Petronelle is stone to Louise's coaxings to come away, but she clings to the maid's hand, until a sharp knocking at the door breaks in upon their silence. . . . Instantly everything goes dark.

(A blank of darkness represents the passing of the next twenty or thirty minutes; then very slowly the scene comes back just as it was, except that a little man, quite dressed up and quite nervous, fidgets back and forth across the room, but staying always a good distance from the dead man and the two women beside the body.

(Another sharp knocking on the door arouses Louise and brings her to her feet; it also brings the little man to a halt; he looks at the maid, she at him. The knocking is repeated.

LOUISE

I'd better go.

(She opens the door. Two men in evening clothes enter uncomfortably; sobered by the knowledge that something is wrong.

You're too late,
Mister D'Arcy.

D'ARCY

What's happened,
Louise?
Why . . . why . . .

(He advances toward Petronelle, and stops short.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

PETRONELLE

(*Looking up and speaking quietly*)
He's dead,
Billy.

D'ARCY

Good God!
(*To his friend*)
Is that true, Joe?
(*The doctor takes a look at Rudolph's body, particularly at the wound.*

THE DOCTOR

Yes, it's true,
All right.
He's dead.

THE LITTLE MAN

(*Turning to D'Arcy*)
I take it
You and this gentleman
Were friends of his?

D'ARCY

(*Disconcerted by the situation*)
Yes, yes.
What about it?
Who are you?

THE LITTLE MAN

I am the clerk,
And a man's been shot,
You understand,
Here, in *this* hotel.
(*He is very offended about it.*

D'ARCY

(*Rather stupid from the shock*)
Yes, yes;
Well, well?

THE CLERK

We ought to telephone
To the police.
It's a murder.

D'ARCY

(*Aroused at last*)
Police!
Oh, that would never do!

THE DOCTOR

(*Also aroused*)
Police!
My good fellow,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Do you know
Who the dead man is?

THE CLERK
(*Nervously*)
I haven't looked at him.
I . . . I don't know. . . .
I haven't been here,
In this hotel
But a few months.
But I've heard it said. . . .
I . . . I couldn't say
Who the dead man is, sir.

LOUISE
(*To D'Arcy*)
His brother's on his way;
He'll be here any minute.

D'ARCY
Then he'll take charge of things.

CLERK
(*Insistently*)
I really feel
I must report
This thing.

D'ARCY
Forget it.
Where's the fellow
That did the shooting?

LOUISE
In that room,
Lying on the bed,
Crying, like a baby.

CLERK
I have a watchman
Guarding him.

D'ARCY
(*Going over to the window and signaling to the clerk*)
Come here.
(*The clerk goes over and joins him; the little man listens to something that quite changes his attitude.*
(*The doctor sits down and gets up again; looks at his watch and goes to the table; he picks up a book, looks at it, and puts it down. Louise is quiet but alert.*

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE CLERK

(All servility, as he and D'Arcy come from the window)
I'd better telephone
Downstairs
And have the rooms
Just under these
Unlocked.
We can take him there.

D'ARCY

Yes, do that.
Of course his brother
May have another plan.

THE LITTLE MAN

We'll see
(He goes into the inner room, not without a certain reluctance at entering it.
(There is a pause. D'Arcy lights a cigar and hands one to the doctor. They smoke solemnly.
(Presently a knock is heard at the door. Louise opens it. A man enters hesitatingly. She shuts and bolts the door after him.

LOUISE

Mr. Phillips?

THE MAN

Yes. . . .
(He sees D'Arcy and the doctor.
(Continuing)
What's happened, D'Arcy?

D'ARCY

Rudolph's been shot,
Tom.

TOM

Good God!

D'ARCY

There he is. . . .
And there's the girl.

TOM

Who did it?

D'ARCY

A fellow
They've got
In the other room,—
Jealousy.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

TOM

Good God!

(He braces himself to the shock, and goes to where the body lies. Petronelle becomes aware of him.

PETRONELLE

(To Tom in a whisper)
You're his brother?

TOM

Yes.

PETRONELLE

(Simply)
He said to send for you;
He said you were a brick;
He said he wasn't sorry.

TOM

(Softened by her sincerity and simplicity)
Poor old Rudolph!
He'd never whine. . . .
He knew
To count on me.
He was the best big brother
That ever a boy had.
(Suddenly he rises and takes charge of the situation.
(Continuing, decisively to every one)
Of course
There mustn't be a scandal.

D'ARCY

I've fixed the clerk.
He's got some rooms
Just under these. . . .
We'd better take him there.

THE DOCTOR

It won't be known
That he was shot,
If every one keeps quiet.

TOM

The first thing is,
Of course,
To get him out of here.
(The clerk comes back.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE CLERK
(*Seeing Tom, and bowing obsequiously*)
Ah, Mr. Phillips' brother,
I suppose?
I've just arranged
To place some rooms
On the next floor
At your disposal.

TOM
Thank you;
Now . . . ?
(*He looks towards the doctor and D'Arcy.*

THE DOCTOR
I have a plan.
(*To the Clerk*)
Are there stairs?

THE CLERK
Yes, a few steps further
Down the hall.

THE DOCTOR
That's good.

TOM
(*To the Clerk*)
No one must know.

THE CLERK
(*Righteously*)
Oh, no, sir,
We're very careful
About the reputation
Of *this* hotel.
No one will know.

TOM
And now,
I want to see the man
Who shot him.

CLERK
Yes, sir.
Of course.
The watchman
Will be discreet, sir,
I'll promise that.
(*He goes again into the inner room.*
(*Tom goes to Petronelle, and touches her on the shoulder.*

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

TOM

(*Gently*)
No one must know
How this thing happened.

PETRONELLE

I'll do
Just as you say.
(*David comes in with the Clerk and the Watchman.*

TOM

(*To David*)
You shot . . .
This man?

DAVID

(*Wearily*)
Yes. . . .
I don't know why.
I think I'm crazy,
But I will give
My life for his.
Send me away. . . .
To die.

TOM

You are not
To die.
But you will leave
New York, tomorrow.
You may go
Wherever you like,
On the other side of the world.
And as long
As you stay away
You will have money. . . .
Plenty of it. . . .
You understand?

DAVID

Yes. . . .
I am to keep my mouth shut.
I understand.
If I had killed this watchman
In a quarrel over a woman,
I would go to the chair.
So it is written in Gotham. . . .

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

But I have killed Cæsar
And so I shall have
An island, if I like,
In the blue Ægean Sea.
So it is written in Gotham.

TOM

(*To the Watchman*)
Take him down,
And watch him;
I will see you both
Later.

THE WATCHMAN

(*To David*)
Come on.
(*David follows him, but glances back at Petronelle.*

DAVID

Moon-flower,
Good-night . . .
(*He goes out with the Watchman, arm in arm.*

TOM

(*To the other men*)
Wait in the next room
While I speak to the girl.
(*On tip-toe, D'Arcy, the doctor, and the Clerk go into the inner room. Tom then motions Louise after them, but she stops before him.*

LOUISE

Be kind to her—
The poor baby.
He told her to tell you
To take good care of her.
It was right pitiful
To see the way
He worried about her.

TOM

I'll take good care of her,
I promise you that.
(*He again motions her towards the door and she goes into the inner room.*
(*Tom goes to Petronelle, and drops on his knees beside her. He speaks gently, scarcely knowing how to begin.*
We must take him away
Now.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

PETRONELLE
(*Startled*)
So soon?

TOM
Yes, pretty soon.

PETRONELLE
To bury him?

TOM
Yes.

PETRONELLE
(*Wistfully*)
Will there be
A funeral?

TOM
Perhaps,
But only a quiet one.

PETRONELLE
I won't be there,
Will I.

TOM
I am afraid not. . . .

PETRONELLE
Then I must say
Good-bye to him now.
(*Bending over Rudolph's body, she folds his hands across his breast and speaks earnestly, as though to one who understands. Tom rises and turns away.*
Rudolph—
Something in me
Has died, too.
I think that I
Have gone with you
On your long voyage;
And that is better,
After all,
Than to wait for you some day,
And wait, and wait,
And wait,—
Knowing it had ended
As such things usually end
In time. . . .
For now, Rudolph,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Day and night,
Always and forever,
With my eyes closed,
I can stand beside you—
Like a bride in a church—
Thinking only
Quiet, holy things.

(She leans over and kisses his hand.

(Clearing his throat of a rising sob, Tom goes toward the inner door. As he opens it and signals for the others to come out—

THE CURTAIN FALLS

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

HENRY JAMES: AN APPRECIATION

ANNA LEACH

AT a small dinner not long ago, where the table if not entirely surrounded by wit was at least a peninsula in bright waters, the world seemed to become a small thing passed from hand to hand; and the light that was in those who handled it was thrown on it as it passed.

After the fate of the recalcitrant captains and kings who are trying to destroy the poor old world's mental, spiritual and physical contours had been firmly decided, there came upon the company that lull that sadly follows when the war has been driven deep into the consciousness of those who think.

The story of Rupert Brooke and his sonnet had been told. That flower that bloomed on the borders of a trench and left one treasure at least, "forever England," had been repeated by a famous voice.

Then an Englishman said, "There is another man, one of your own countrymen in spite of himself, whose comrades in all civilized countries will rise when his name is called, and answer: 'Dead on the Field of Honor.' His name was Henry James."

"Is!"

"I stand corrected. Is. As long as men read books in English, his name will be.

"It is not every victim of this war who dies by steel and fire. James was an instrument delicately tuned to every vibration. He heard the overtones. He saw the shades of blue and rose and deep purple playing over what the blind world saw as a plain lavender surface. The poor little five senses that are all we have to link us to life were mysteriously sharpened in him. He was the true son of the Swedenborgian philosopher, who knew seven Heavens. His hand was the scale that weighs an atom; the flutter of an eyelash sent a breeze to his cheek. The brutality, the cynicism, the tearing and the rending of the world rent and tore him. The poison gases, the jets of liquid

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

fire on far frontiers, scorched him as he went about his work in England; and so he died."

"It also tore him from his country. He felt that we failed him," an American ambulance man said.

"I think," the reply came, "that the divorce between James and America was no sudden thing. It had long been a case of incompatibility of temperament. America was too demonstrative, and sometimes lacking in a fine understanding."

"But, would it ever be possible for a man who had lived almost entirely in Europe after his twelfth year to be in full sympathy with America? He understood many phases of us better than we understand them ourselves. It may be said that James was much better appreciated in America than in England, but to him the charm of England lay in that they did not talk so much as we do. The English women did not get up clubs to understand him in concert. James loved tranquillity. He disliked being personally handled, as it were. He was fastidious."

"When I read his books I think back to the building of a great monument I know well," the Anglo-Indian said. "He cut bits of stone, precious sometimes, sometimes pebbles under his feet whose curious shape or color attracted him, and fitted them together with the care of a lapidary. Often those who had heard of his work came by out of curiosity, and being pressed for time did not wait to see that when he had finished, a Taj Mahal rose to the vision."

"And like the Taj," a woman ventured, "sometimes it was the tomb of something loved."

The protests drowned out what else she might have said, but when she could speak again she insisted that there were times when the women whose histories James recorded left the ways we are united in considering the ways of righteousness, while we are led along by his genius until we arrive at an impossibility of giving them anything less than our complete sympathy.

"He makes what we know is wrong to be what we feel to be right."

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

And everybody spent the rest of the evening in more or less contradiction.

Mr. James was essentially moral, and it was a quality he valued in other writers. "Be the morality false or true, the writer's deference to it greets us like a perfume," he said somewhere. But his morality was the artist's morality. Any lover of the long list of heroines knows that Mr. James does not address himself to the school girl, unless she is a very exceptional school girl. He pre-supposes that if you come to his feast you have at least the sophisticated taste that enjoys caviare, and have embraced the fact that Truth has not yet been discovered, or at least isolated. The adventures of his men and women are not the adventures of the cinematograph, but they nevertheless very often have their action on the verge of very deep chasms. His heroes and heroines are those who have a flame of some sort in their souls; those who feel themselves bursting with an inner grandeur. And whatever gods they have been brought up to worship, whatever sacrifices they have dressed, they have set that flame to but one altar fire. If the fire die, they are incapable of fumbling into new temples and setting alight another fire.

We may think of the girl in "In the Cage" leading her respectable life, amply nourished by the pickles and cheese of Mr. Mudge's careful providing, to whom the one flare of romance never came back. To James with his sensitiveness to half tones there was no "good" and "bad"; if there were he did not consider it his province to point it out. He labelled nothing. He presented.

It is said that the brothers, the novelist and psychologist, wrote a letter to the other every night. It will be very interesting, when these letters, if they exist, finally become the property of a public that needs them, to see how the work of one reacted on the work of the other. What William James told by formula, Henry James worked out in terms of life.

The hard distinctions were not for the novelist. He saw around and beyond them into other dimensions. He took men and women under the stress of the great emotion, and was

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

himself interested to see what the most potent of elixirs, the wine of life, did with and for them.

Sometimes he gave to our American standards an exotic point of view,—an exotic situation, one we had never seen, or, if we had seen, pretended we had not. It is a curious habit of Americans,—we say Americans because we are the best example of that new society which is still thin skinned—to pretend to believe, and very often to succeed in believing, that a thing sufficiently ignored, undefined, never could be nor should be. James knew better than that, and despite denials went on bringing out his great galaxy of characters, showing them so real that they seem to be inevitable. That many of them were real in essentials he has told us. The characters he himself loved,—and although he is so impersonal it is impossible to conceal who among his people are heart of his heart,—he almost always puts in complex relations. If they are weak they allow their gods to be taken from them. If they are strong they make their sacrifice. He never asked that the supreme sacrifice should be made to what he felt, what he was certain nature intended should be, only the half-gods. In reality his code was as stern as that of John Wesley, and in essential, fundamental things, it was not unlike it.

The most wonderful of James' attributes was his flexibility. Joseph Conrad said of him once, "I do not know into what brand of ink Mr. Henry James dips his pen, but I know that his mind is steeped in the spring of perpetual youth. The stream of his inspiration runs brimful in a predetermined direction."

It was this youth, this response to a world changing from day to day in its habits of living, in its demands, its manner of expressing its inner life by its living, which kept his work fresh. In all his long years, until the day he died he never grew stale. He never saw to-day as though it were yesterday.

He was always responsive to new emotions, to new methods of expression in other men. As far back as 1894, when he was already a famous man who had every right to expect to be allowed to go on in the groove he had made for himself, if he had made a groove, Henry Harland went to him with the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

project of "The Yellow Book." With him to that interview Harland took the strange young genius Aubrey Beardsley.

Already Mr. James had recognized what he called Beardsley's "disconcerting" talent. What a character he would have been to introduce into the company of those Mr. James had chosen out of life to portray!

The two young men were met by every encouragement; and during the short life of "The Yellow Book" Mr. James was a contributor. Everything that was, was interesting to him, and it kept him ever brilliant; his mode of expression eternally tuned to the vibrations of the passing world.

Bernard Shaw makes Julius Cæsar say, "We grow old, but the crowd on the Appian Way is always the same age." It was the crowd on the Appian Way that intrigued the fancy of Mr. James, and he had the good fortune to see it from many balconies and to look at it for a long time.

Few realize how much he wrote. In 1896—or was it 1906?—some one made a book of his titles and publishers. He wrote "Daisy Miller" when he was about thirty-four years old, but he had polished his pen on many an essay before that day. "Daisy Miller" almost at once comes into the mind at the mention of his work, but to a stranger from Mars, who wished to understand his genius, that book would be very inadequate. It would be much better comprehended as a work of art after reading his later books.

Now the critics tell us that this young girl is an "impossible" type, that we long ago left her behind in our social progress; but if you look, you will still see her pretty face, her dainty shoes and parasol, and hear her inconsequent laugh along the Appian Way. Mr. James was not interested in passing types. So long as countries are young, so long as old countries die, and in dying make soil for new civilizations, Daisy Millers will endure.

The story, to those who have been so occupied in informing themselves of the gentle manners, the fine ideals and conventional polish of present day phases of American girlhood through the illuminating works of Mr. Robert Chambers and Mr. Owen Johnson, is a very simple one. It is told by a

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Europeanized young American who imagines that he has penetrated the skin of life a little deeper than we quite believe. It is the short course of a young girl from Schenectady who made the acquaintance of the narrator on the shores of Lake Geneva at Vevey. It gives the setting of her little brother and her silly mother, and shows her behaving on the sophisticated shores of Europe exactly as she would behave in Schenectady. She makes the hair of the young man rise on his head; she shocks Roman society (a task, if we are to believe half we hear, which must be much more difficult than it was thirty years ago), is snubbed by a compatriot, and finally dies of the indiscretion of spending a long evening in the Coliseum alone with a young Italian.

Her beauty and her charm, her innocence, which even the young Italian hastens to celebrate over her grave, and something in the air of her free speech which makes you certain that Mr. Miller making money back there in Schenectady has an American sense of humor and a gift of passing it on, causes you to lament, if the story is your chief interest, that the Miller family as story material did not fall into the sympathetic hands of another artist, Mr. Booth Tarkington. She would not have died of Roman fever in that case. He would have rescued her, and in some way caused the snubbing Mrs. Walker to feel chagrin to the end of her days.

We cannot agree that she or her mother have passed on out of our civilization. It was only the other day, comparatively speaking, that a young girl in a European city received alone the visits of a royal prince, while her mother went about to tea parties and gave the prince's visit to their apartment as an excuse for her daughter's failure to accompany her. And who of us has not seen young girls, even in war years, sitting in European hotel corridors with young foreigners? When Daisy Miller first appeared, first broke on the consciousness of America, she was instantly repudiated by American motherhood. It was not the girls who had had, or were having, a "good time" in Europe who resented it. It was the mothers who had taken them there who could not, as James would say, *bear* it.

When England delighted in the story, Americans grew even

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

stiffer over it. Those were the sensitive days. They were even helped by the critics. Nowadays few who would feel themselves capable of criticizing James could imagine taking him to task for the subject of one of his stories. It is not so much what is done as how it is done.

In reality the story was an almost passionate, and very proud picture of the true innocence of the young American girl. Mr. Howells treated the subject in an entirely different way, a way more understandable to the public common to both men, in his "Lady of the Aroostook." Both girls, of such different types and fates, were Unas who walked with lions.

But in Mr. James' case, the subject of his brilliant study had as little to do with the matter as the model of Manet's "Olympe" on the walls of the Louvre has to do with the value of that work of art. Mr. James is first and foremost an artist, and his art is so nearly that of the painter that it is a continual temptation to speak of his mode of expression in terms of paint. He is called a realist, but he is more nearly an impressionist of the Velasquez school, inasmuch as he concentrates your attention and, by his lines of direction, leads your fancy at his will. He gives you the point of departure and you follow him to full comprehension of his subject. If wit is the thing you would have said yourself, James is the prince of wits, for he makes you say it yourself, hypnotized by his swift flight of comprehension. He is the realist he is said to be, just exactly as far as any great artist may be a realist. One of the first things that an art student learns is the law of perspective, of construction, the law of things as they are. But if he was not born knowing that art is not all mathematics, that the only way to make a thing appear consistent is to exaggerate it, to accent it according to the demands of the spirit within him, then he is not an artist at all.

It was the wonder of Mr. James that he could take the commonplace and teach it its own meanings. He felt a close sympathy for painters and had many friends among them. He called some of the most famous among them his "playmates." He often said that George Du Maurier gave him an idea for "The Real Thing," which he tells in the first person, as a

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

painter-illustrator. This story of the fashionable couple who came to the studio, at the end of their tether, to offer themselves as models, was only a distressing incident to Du Maurier. It was Mr. James who saw the comedy, the satire, and the tragedy in it, and translated it into all those things for us to see. When he opens the story he gives us a description of the man as though he were actually making one of those figures from Punch which filled us with awed admiration in the eighties.

"The gentleman, a man of fifty, very high and very straight, with a moustache grizzled, and a dark grey walking coat admirably fitted, would have struck me as a celebrity if celebrities were often striking. It was a truth of which I had for some time been conscious, that a figure with a good deal of frontage was, as one might say, almost never a public institution. A glance at the lady helped to remind me of this paradoxical law! She also looked too distinguished to be a personality."

The difference between a Du Maurier and a Velasquez or a John Sargent—in another artist story one felt that in some way Mr. James had for the moment slipped into the skin of Mr. Sargent—could not be better shown than here. You "get" the distinguished-looking strangers at the first outline, and there was where Mr. Du Maurier stopped.

The understanding that the grand elevation did not adorn a palace of vast spaces, that the cornices were tin and stucco, was quite beyond Mr. Du Maurier's expression. He wanted you to imagine that all his high, slim, aquiline-nosed, grey-moustached men of fifty were generals who had the D. S. O. at the very least.

The artist was given all credit for the original incident, but the penetrating germ of what became "The Real Thing" must have floated on the air of some drawing room where princesses abounded.

Mr. James' imagery always made finished pictures. He likened something somewhere to an Eastern caravan, and it is difficult to match the description of it as "it comes looming into view with crude colors in the sun, fierce pipes in the air, high spears against the sky, all athrill with natural joy."

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Or take this, written from Rome: "Going lately into Santa Francesca Romana, the picturesque church near the temple of peace, I found a feast for the eyes—a dim, crimson-toned light through curtained windows, a great festoon of tapers around the altar, a bulging girdle of lamps for the shrunken shrine. Beneath, a dozen white robed Dominicans scattered in the happiest composition on the pavement."

Mr. James has the supreme charm of the spontaneous. He is never cold. He expresses with a poet's knowledge the inner meanings of words. He made nothing by another man's receipt. He never dealt, as he once accused another of dealing, in the second hand. His color was "pure pigment."

"The sky above the ilexes was incredibly blue, and the ilexes themselves incredibly black; and the white moon peeping above the trees" when you saw the world in his company. And what he shows you, translates for you—that insistently endures.

There is no doubt of his being a realist, but he was always so incomparably the artist that he could refine shabbiness into "something spectral and strange." He felt it wrong to put, as he accused George Sand of putting, the faintest wash of rose color over the real. But he saw no reason in a light that made it ugly. There are moments when he is cruel. There are moments when you feel traces of the cruelty of the far paganism of the Renaissance, in "The Golden Bowl," for example; but it has the beauty of paganism too.

Those who met Henry James, if they were introduced to him by friends, were sometimes surprised at the freedom with which he analyzed acquaintances. It was never unkindly, and always impersonally; but one anxious lady who spoke of it after a first meeting, said: "How *could* he know I will never tell what he said about Mary!" It was exactly as an artist might make sketches. Only, instead of the turn of a satin shoulder, the play of light on an eye, he trifled with the turn of a mind, the light of an opinion. It has always been allowed to a painter to reproduce his friends, use them as models; but nothing is more reprehensible in a writer. It may have been a following out of this train of thought which induced him to write "The Real Thing"—just to show them, as it were.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The "germ" played a great part with Mr. James. He speaks somewhere of the way an idea came to him.

"The germ wherever gathered has ever been for me the germ of a 'story,' and most of the stories straining in shape under my hand have sprung from a single small seed as minute and wind-blown as that casual hint for 'The Spoils of Poynton' unwittingly dropped by my neighbor; a mere floating particle on the stream of talk."

From that floating stream of talk he takes one of his most characteristic novelettes. It began with gossip about a woman who refused to give her son the furniture in a house which he had inherited. Out of that slender material grew a rich study in the psychology of four people, who were doubtless much more alive than the sordid originals of the old tale ever were in all their lives. For into his people Mr. James puts the race. They are playing their parts as symbols, and are alive to us with all the deep understanding of our common humanity—not the sentimental side of us; Mr. James never lays violent hands upon that. Like all great artists, he is impersonal. Within the modernity, the supreme originality of his form of expression, he is almost classic in his adherence to the old tradition of art expression, in that he drew for his public the characters, the situations, he had chosen to portray, and gave them without one hint of his own opinions concerning them. We know instinctively that his Julia Bride and Princess Cassimassima, his Maisie and Daisy, must have interested him enormously, intrigued him to the exclusion of all else, while they were on the stage he had built for them, but just where and why is the exquisite secret we chase through all his brilliant sentences to discover.

Without rancor, even without charity, with sweep and line and color, he gives us the essentials of what he happens to see. What is most wonderful, he suggests it with a detail that leaves nothing out. He shows the inner man, and in some subtle way the forces that have created the thing the inner man is. If it has grown up, developed in generations of mellow living, someway we understand it, through a thousand delicate shades of expression not one of which tells us anything of the sort. It

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

is stroke on stroke, glaze on glaze, blue horizon or far storm in the sky, that tells us the reason for what stands before us. We see the battling of the gods and the furies in men and women, and the art is so wonderful we cannot surprise the secret of *how*. The gods and the furies are the instincts that lie deep in our humanity. They test themselves against the laws and inherited tastes and habits of a complex civilization; and they do it in low tones in the light speech of drawing rooms.

It is not always strength that wins in his stories. Sometimes there comes to join the forces of life an ally who brings up her own reserves on one side or the other. Whatever the story, it almost always resolves itself finally into the influence that a woman and a man have on each other. It is the old tale that the Creator told in the Garden of Eden. Mr. James uses this influence, in his method of presenting them, as an artist uses light. Behind the slenderest sketch of his one sees the knowledge of life, as one sees in the lightest drawing by a great artist the certainties of his accumulated knowledge. There are those who do not follow him long enough to delight in him. Mr. Howells said of him long ago that he everlastingly piqued the "finer female sense" in whose favor the prosperity of our fiction resides. That he did; that he everlastingly did!

One went at a book of his, being a woman, at full sail, sometimes with a satisfaction touched with malice at an understanding of human foibles so charmingly shared. But before the tale is told—being a human being, some hidden thing that was all your own came out to shock and to pique you. It is a dull woman who can leave Mr. James' stories with entire complacency —but that also is true of that story of the Garden of Eden!

Mr. James is not a snapper of whips, a maker of epigrams. One goes all the road from there to here without picking one flower. Like Maisie, one *knows* because it is impossible not to know. There will be no Henry James calendars for villa walls. Indeed, he even avoids the climax. The thing, the essential thing, nearly always happens out of your vision. If you see it, it is with an oblique eye. It simply is. It is visible as the atmosphere of a landscape is visible; and yet his stories are clear

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and tellable. The " attenuation " which the hasty reader finds is not there.

When a lover of James begins to point an argument by referring to one of the tales, he is so possessed by fear that there is one of those who speaks his tongue, who understands as he understands, who has missed that particular story, that he runs ahead to tell of its charm, of the impossibility of missing it—in its " fruitful essence."

What group ever spoke of ghost stories without " The Turn of the Screw " being given as the supreme example! Mr. James' own story of the " germ " of that piece of supreme horror was so frank; the workman was entirely detached from the terrible work.

" The Liar," one of his subtlest stories, begins with Oliver Lyon's arrival at a country house in England. The flavor of an English country house opening its doors to a guest permeates the page like an essence. He tells us that he saw that the proprietors of Stayes would do him very well. In his bedroom on such occasions he always looked first at the books on the shelf and the prints on the walls; these things would give in a sort the social, the conversational value of his hosts.

He goes on to say, " There was the customary novel of Mr. Le Fanu for the bedside, the ideal reading in a country house for the hours after midnight. Oliver Lyons could scarcely forbear beginning it while he buttoned his shirt."

The book on that table must have been " Uncle Silas," and we are certain that it was at that very house, " round the hall fire in a grave old country house," he told us, " where the talk turned on some homely pretext to apparitions and night fears; to the marked and sad drop to the general supply and still more to the general quality of such commodities. The good, the really effective and heart shaking ghost stories appeared all to have been told, and neither new crop nor new type in any quarter awaited us."

He spoke of the new crop of psychological story washed clean of all queerness, and the more it was respectably certified the more it was washed clear of its dear old sacred terror.

It was then that that host who must have put " Uncle Silas "

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

on the bedside table spoke of a tale which had made a never-to-be-forgotten impression on him as a young man. It had to do with two small children in some far lonely house to whom the spirits of two "bad" servants came.

Mr. James took this "germ," and out of it built with consummate art "The Turn of the Screw." It is literally a final turn of the screw on nerves which have been brought to an ever higher tension, sending shivering currents of horror through the consciousness. One seems at last to grow sick with the slime from the pit itself. The very names of the two demons, Miss Jessel and Peter Quint, attach themselves to shuddering nerves.

As Mr. James went on to tell how he did it, with what detached attention to the artistry of the thing he built on to the fragment of fact given him, remembering the haunted children and the prowling servile spirits as a "value" of the disquieting sort, you see him as one of the immortal race of creative artists.

It must have been thus that Wagner carefully measured the value of his *motif,* shivering the nerves to love as James shivered them to horror. And James casually mentioned that he wrote the thing as a "Christmas story"!

As a traveller Mr. James has an audience quite distinct from those who found a new novel by him an event. "A Little Tour in France," written in the early eighties, introduced the château country of France, and one might almost say the visible Renaissance to many people. It was twenty years after his friends had followed him there, before Touraine was discovered by the crowds and Cook began running motor buses to the home of romance; before Blois and Chenonceaux began to rise on Riverside Drive, and the faience of M. Ulysse was exploited in Fifth Avenue shops.

It will never be quite the same, however mellow lies the autumn sunlight on the delicate tower of St. Hubert's chapel. It has been too much handled. The caretakers at Loches in those old days had time to read lovingly the inscription on Agnes' tomb, and to give you a nut from the marronier, planted by François Premier himself, to stick in your own garden. One was allowed to linger in the dungeon where Louis XI hung the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cage of Cardinal Le Balue; who survived, Mr. James tells us, "so much longer than might have been expected this extraordinary mixture of seclusion and exposure."

A great crowd of followers have tried to surprise his secret, to "paint like him," but the wonder of Henry James will always be his alone: the savor of the life he sees as he makes you see it. One loves his sophistications and his simplicities. When he continually told of how this story or that came from some incident given to him by this or that, it was as though the magician held up the pebble and allowed you to see it turned into the pigeon blood ruby before your eyes.

Of him we may say, as he said of another, that he "put for the beautiful always in a work of art, the close, the curious, the deep."

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE MODERN SOCIAL RELIGION

HORACE HOLLEY

AN Oriental legend represents the world as resting upon the back of an elephant, which stands upon a tortoise, which in turn floats in a shoreless sea. The western mind dismisses the image as a childish absurdity, not realizing its symbolic value: the elephant meaning power, the tortoise wisdom, and the ocean love. If we dismiss the interpretation also, preferring the alternative of natural science—that the world depends upon gravitation, cosmic evolution, or atomic attraction and repulsion,—we actually return to the elephant, the tortoise and the shoreless sea under different names. For what is the philosophic equivalent to these laws of science? What is science but a new mythology, a modern naming and describing of things whose essence remains entirely unknown? The discussion is raised to a new plane, however, when we perceive that the legend uses the term "world" likewise as a symbol, signifying not the physical earth but the human world, the world of society.

I

The individual almost invariably believes that his action and his thought are equally free and unique; that he is a free agent among free agents; that all men create their own motives as they create their own means. All of us alike accept from society certain fundamental attitudes about life in the same manner we accept climate. These attitudes we develop in one direction or another, according to personal character; and by thinking habitually in terms of this personal re-action, each of us grows more and more aware of his freedom to re-act from a given attitude, and less and less aware of his inability to establish the attitude itself. Personal character rests upon certain assumptions about life, and rests so completely upon them that they are universally lost from view. The actual limitation laid upon every individual's freedom of thought by the society in

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

which he lives becomes evident only when we turn our attention from the closed circle of the present to the narrow endless highway of the past. History is significant through the development and decay, not of individual minds, but of universal attitudes.

Thus, although the predominant assumptions of a society are practically invisible when sought in the mazes of personal reaction, they emerge clearly and unmistakably when traced from one to another epoch. They must be tracked through changes in the outer form of society to society's inner core. They must be distinguished as between developments in method and developments in purpose. For upon our ability to determine what elements of thought are organic and what derivative, depends our hope of thinking ourselves out of the trap of re-action in which all previous societies have perished. We have learned by the bitterest experience to avoid that kind of thought which compels us to resist what, after all, is an equivalent to our own in hope, in will, in emotion and in possession, veiled only by a difference in names. We feel the need, once and for all, of penetrating to the inmost essence of truth, where truth stays ever at one with itself.

Beneath the differences setting off one nation from another nation, one race from another race, and one religion from another religion, I find three fundamental assumptions about life, three habitual modes of thought accepted with equal, unconscious intensity on both sides every frontier separating the social existence of man. These assumptions, like the goblins of tradition, stand beside the cradle of every mind, and their invisible influence affects us all. They have made all men alike at the centre of being, however other influences have made us unlike at the surface. Over consciousness they have thrown a net compared to which the antagonism of armed states and proselytizing churches, the distinctions of language and tradition, seem as inconsiderable as floating webs. They are to our minds as atmosphere to our bodies. They are to our souls as language to our minds—so closely identified with the soul's consciousness that to think about these three attitudes at all is to think about them in terms of the attitudes themselves. They grow visible

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

only as the mind detaches itself from the influence of society and molds itself according to a different law.

These three assumptions are:

That labor is a curse.
That religion is an escape from life.
That money is wealth.

It is easy to perceive that these assumptions are not secondary to social experience, but primary. They are not re-actions from a condition of environment, but are the fixed basis from which all re-action springs. They transcend the personal will, but they transcend also the will of each period and each social group. They came into being before any social form existing to-day—and it has been the effort of re-action from one or the other of these assumptions which has conditioned every social form. For they have not to do with immediate purposes, immediate methods, but with the necessities of which purpose is born. They are independent of nationality, race and religion. Nationality, race and religion merely serve to show for the moment how these assumptions worked out. In the life of consciousness, they correspond to the body's instincts of self-preservation and reproduction. On this plane of essential truth, the Englishman and the German are at one; on this plane the Christian and the Jew are at one; on this plane the living man is one with yesterday's ten thousand years. That labor must be avoided: that religion is an escape from life, or life an escape from religion: that money, as wealth, is the end of social life—here we arrive at the common denominator of all things, the similarity of unconscious purpose whose unceasing pressure upon individual minds has molded society into the struggle of like against like we find everywhere to-day.

History warrants, apparently, a score of mutually-exclusive interpretations, each the key to an epoch, an environment or a tendency; not one unlocks the corridors opening from one age to another age, from one tendency to another tendency, from one environment to another environment, as this threefold assumption or attitude undeniably serves to do.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

II

The mythology of all races begins with a golden age, the first characteristic of which was freedom from labor. This agreement on the part of peoples historically unassociated, but psychologically akin, is extremely significant. It does not signify with respect to events, but it signifies much with respect to the nature of the mind. For that myth is the image of human experience brought into contact with reality at its sharpest angle. Every society represents a special method of shifting the curse of the burden of labor. Revolution is the effort to shift it from its accustomed groove to a new position. The name and sign of slavery passes, but the fact remains. There is a necessity in human nature for endless compromise, a compromise outwardly between individuals and groups, but actually between a man's power of action, his power of thinking, willing, feeling. The result of this is to obscure the real fact at issue—namely, that under existing ideals of personal life every society is doomed to bankruptcy as a whole—and make revolution merely a matter of replacing old masters by new and paying an old debt by incurring a new and greater one. Since every individual holds in the back of his mind the unalterable conviction that labor is a curse, we aim for personal or group mastery rather than for a solution, whence the problem is postponed but never met. Nowhere is there equilibrium; everywhere do men strain desperately at the leashes of a common wrong. We are all bound to the circumference of the wheel of fortune: the more our agony spins it, the clearer our despair at not being able to attain the middle ground. Each generation hands down the problem unsolved. At most times the way of compromise and deferred payment is possible, but to-day, in the light of our new experience of the catastrophe released by ignorance, we begin to feel that not to attempt a solution at last is to lay the mines of universal upheaval. For, after all, the instinct to avoid labor and achieve leisure creates an unbearable tension within every state. The contact of states *in tension* is the contact of hatred and suspicion out of which war comes as naturally as sparks

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

from the flint. Let us have done with recrimination. The cause of this war lies beyond any individual will or any national ambition. It lies within the belief, to which we are all subject, that labor is the curse of life.

III

The Middle Ages in Europe carried to an extreme a tendency operating among men to some degree at all times. The monk who turned his back upon marriage and social life merely defined an instinct uneasily fluttering within us all. He made the opposition between God and the world, soul and body, religion and society, a matter of life and death selection; we make it an antithesis below the portals of conscious will. The monk remained on one side the chasm at the expense of uncountable effort, because the chasm seemed to yawn at his very feet; we pass back and forth across a bridge of social convention. We no longer accept the doctrine separating the life of the body from the life of the soul, but we unite the two claims by suppressing religion into a routine or an innocuous hope.

The two claims are most sharply opposed, when the two claims are separately perceived, by the fact of sex. Men are bound to society, even at the expense of spiritual development, through marriage and parenthood. Patriotism is based upon loyalty to one's fathers; labor is a matter of loyalty to one's children. The monk, perceiving an absolute hostility between religion and the world, renounced both forms of loyalty by a terrific effort of the will. When the tension of will and desire gradually relapsed, religion withdrew into its normal state, a convention expressing a hope. While this compromise at the expense of religion seems inevitable, and even satisfactory, it is so only to those who have never been aware of religion as a dynamic in the soul, a sheer possession, a life-renewing joy. We are unable to follow the men of old upon their great adventure, but we realize it with little of that feeling of lack embittering or inspiring the lover who loves no more.

We have repudiated the monk, indeed, without escaping the consequences of his influence. It is around the subject of sex

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that his influence most closely gathers. Toward sex, obviously, we have neither the unconsciousness of nature nor the superiority of the angels. Each generation learns the facts of sex from the gutters instead of the altars of life, thus poisoning life at its very source. There seems an element of shame in the experience which the lover transcends but which the race accepts. This attitude, suppressing and distorting the major part of every emotion and thought, compels us to attempt to realize states of mind by will and reason which are only possible to free impulse, the impulse of mind and body and soul fused each to each and all in all. It has placed the rose of true happiness in a dark cellar and then tried to make it grow by the light of a candle dip. That wisdom which is the art of life, as well as its morality, is seldom attained by the groping of one mind alone. It comes into being slowly, the accumulation of many experiences, and as it comes so it endures, by passing on graciously and reverently from father to son, mother to daughter, friend to friend. The instinct to feel shame in sex cuts this wisdom at the very root. It raises a barrier between mind and mind, heart and heart, an invisible, unacknowledged wall, thwarting the value of every relationship, and preventing one life from giving its best to another, or receiving from another its own instinctive supreme. The equivalent of prostitution in the streets is a prostitution we all suffer in our secret heart. None escape. The innocent suffer with the guilty, for as in the case of the idea that labor is a curse, so here: it has established a world in which our best strength and purest hope spend themselves in re-acting from wrong. Thus to estimate the full effect of this assumption upon the progress of society, we must come if possible to realize not merely how it ruins the weak but also how it negatives the strong. It has created a spiritual climate, as it were, to which most can become habituated, but a climate of noxious cold in which man's best nature cannot unfold. Only at rare intervals, and in rare beings, a Browning or a Dante, have the two poles of life found contact and permitted the rich currents of life to flow freely from vision to desire, from desire to will, from will to action, from action to vision.

Evidently, the "religious" life has become for most men

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and women the symbol of an activity attempting to maintain itself within a vacuum. All the paths of teaching lead away from the reality of social intercourse, the interests of business and art and science and state, into a region somewhere between this world and another, a moral claim destitute of adequate physical and intellectual expressions. Religion is conceived in terms of "good" and "evil" which neither inspire the mind and heart nor make use of life's most customary impulses. Thus the recurrent instinct toward spiritual attainment which stirs at least faintly in every human being is thwarted at its very first effort. It gazes out into a void, a void leading neither to adventure nor joy; and the dismay of this experience usually withholds the soul from expressing its first faint needs again. The church has nothing to offer comparable with the adventures visible in society on every hand. Art is more inspiring, science more effective, social reform more beneficial to the life of the race. Modern society, indeed, is the field of myriad crusades, each summoning a particular temperament to some engrossing task in company with congenial fellows. Not one of these crusades was established by the church; in their inception most were even bitterly opposed by the church; but now, when established in society beyond opposition, the church has been compelled to leave its altars and follow in their train. Under these conditions, the result of the assumption that religion and life are somehow unrelated or opposed, men tend to sway restlessly between two impossible extremes.

IV

The idea that money is wealth, and as such represents at once both the main-spring of effort and its reward, merely translates into the life of the mind the physical ideal of food—food the supreme, continual necessity; food the delight; food the end of effort in hunting and fighting; food the symbol of victory and achievement; food the more irresistible compulsion in that in the primitive life of nature there was not enough to go around. This ideal has been carved upon the racial mind by ages on ages of animal existence. Channels of instinctive

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

impulse and habit have been scored along which our thought still tends to flow. For even in the modern world, the equivalent of food is money; and when life is reduced to its lowest terms, the battling of two passionate beasts for one meal, it would seem inevitable still that money should be regarded by us as food was regarded by the dweller in caves and jungles. But life is less often reduced to its lowest terms; when so reduced for the unfortunate to-day, it comes about not through the absolute lack of food but through its improper distribution. The experience of the fear of extinction which naturally made food the wealth of the savage in nature is only renewed for the civilized man by the stupid selfishness of his fellow men. It is not based upon unescapable universal laws. But money does not represent merely food in our world; it represents a thousand other values; and because it represents these values also, money becomes subject to laws and conditions very unlike the laws and conditions controlling food.

For every mind contains desires and tendencies whose fulfilment compels the individual to find his particular place in the world of intellectual, æsthetic and moral values. Here it is that the instinct jealousy guarding the assumption that money is wealth leads us all astray. Every activity carried on from desire rather than from necessity brings the mind its own adequate reward, a reward utterly removed from the fact of money and inestimable in terms of money. Of this the conspicuous cases are of course the artist, the scientist, the inventor, the philosopher and the mystic—all those types universally recognized as being driven by their genius to perform a destined task. To these types, money, far from being wealth, is on the contrary nothing else than poverty. Money is poverty to them because while requiring it as means, and independent of it as reward, the world denies money to them as means but heaps it upon them as reward. The genius has before him the alternative of supplying society with the bread and circuses the world believes it worth paying for, or of losing his economic foothold among men. He who responds to the pressure of the commonplace rapidly wastes that passionate initiative whose expres-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sion is its own reward, while he who follows the inner illumination undergoes so many difficulties that his vision tends to isolate him from the experience of his fellows. In either case, money is not wealth but poverty. Money is spiritual falsehood used to disguise spiritual lack. It is darkness concealed behind the glitter of light.

But such a proposition seems to be true only of those who are conspicuously the artist, the inventor, the statesman. For the rest of us it does not appear true at all. Why should we not therefore sit snugly each one in his own economic castle, regretting the pain endured by a few yet after all not shared by ourselves? But strange as it may seem, this self-satisfaction in the majority, not the suffering of the few, is the real tragedy of the situation. For in that suffering there is a quality of recompense not appreciated by other minds because they cannot experience it. Great mental anguish endured for the sake of an ideal opens the eye of the soul. But what concerns all of us equally is the fact that the isolation, the separateness of identity, characterizing the body on the physical plane, is not an attribute of mind on the plane of consciousness. The isolation and self-sufficiency of each body permits extinction to occur to one person without affecting the well-being of any other person except as some are related to him by special, immediate ties. But on the plane of mind another law operates. Here the relationship is not immediate, like that of the family; it is impersonal, transcending time as it transcends place. For every mind that grows aware of its own need for the inspiration or guidance of art, thought or character, grows aware also that this need relates it to certain other minds by ties not less binding than one's ties of blood. The fact is, each conspicuous "leader" merely concentrates into one creative will an element existing in other men as a diffused, receptive will. The ordinary man is neither poet nor hero, but his character nevertheless is composed as it were of concentric circles each of which corresponds to the various elements concentrated by genius. And he grows aware of these elements in himself only to the degree that he meets with spiritual masters who can summon them from his unconscious to his conscious mind. Thus in making an environ-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ment difficult for the genius to render his message completely and explicitly to the world, society does more, unhappily, than to torture a few sensitive minds: society makes it difficult for all men and women to realize the best elements in their own lives. From our spiritual blindness we repudiate the very power that might turn our weakness into strength. And falling back upon the personal relationships offered us in the physical world, we find that which seems to justify blindness as by immutable law. Here the blind leads the blind, and the dumb attempts to show the dumb how to speak. Into such an *impasse* has our faith in money as the end rather than the means of life led us. The momentary escape we seize vicariously through drama, music and thought, is made possible only through the efforts of souls who denied that material faith with every atom of their being. At ordinary times, when we take for granted the presence in society of an accumulated inspiration, the relation between society and its spiritual leaders seems one of reverence and gratitude; but the truth appears with tragic clearness at times of crisis when the foundations of life are threatened by revolution or by war. Then do men learn to discriminate between official authority and spiritual power. Then the false leader proves his weakness, and in their hearts all men realize the fatal inadequacy of their customary ideals. They look yearningly for the statesman with vision and the orator with fire. While the altar is deserted by the priest of convention, and the throne left vacant by the usurper of egotism, there comes a moment of terrible insight when in every heart the accidental gives way to the essential, the false to the true; and this universal change of heart on the part of individuals prepares the way for a general recognition of real qualities among those divinely chosen to lead. Seldom does genius fail to respond to the summons of a people in the darkness of catastrophe. By its calm power, men not only surmount crisis: they plough it under to fertilize a richer harvest of lives. But there are catastrophes also when the leader does not appear. He does not appear at certain epochs because the soul, powerful to still the waves of passion and ride the winds of will, is a soul brought to the station of power by a long preparation. But

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a society which generally devotes itself to cheap folly and false pride discourages the preparation of spiritual power. That society pays the price of error to the full. False leader opposes false leader; the people divide desperately against themselves; the end of it all is destruction. The beginning of it all is faith in money rather than in soul.

V

While it is only too certain that the progress of society has always been determined by these three assumptions: that labor is a curse; that religion is separate from life; and that money is wealth; nevertheless they are more and more consciously opposed, separately and combined, by the spirit of the age. For the first time men have deliberately set themselves the task of changing labor from a curse to a blessing, and in so doing merely give effect to plain principles of psychology recently defined. For the first time have laymen proved that religion is not a hierocratic mystery nor a social convention, but a power to live the day through more deeply and consciously. For the first time also has society begun to try the effects of wealth laid by as means to an end rather than as an end in itself. Indeed, there is a prevailing, amazed uneasiness about the entire problem of ownership which betokens some radical change in our methods of labor and reward. If we could compare the state of public opinion to-day with that of a generation ago, we should appreciate what an enormous change has taken place at the very foundations of human consciousness. That change has not yet worked out in terms of daily life; it is a difference of instinct rather than of action; yet it shows that the current of social evolution has squarely reversed itself, its influence henceforth committed to a radically reconstructed world. The change is most pronounced in the case of the conscious few, but as we have come to realize, the leader is not isolated —he is a centre of spiritual energy acting and re-acting upon all minds. Realizing this fact, we are in a position to perceive that alterations in men's instinctive assumptions about life are

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

infinitely more consequential than changes in their outer lives. Though our physical lives join us closely to the lives of our grandparents, as spiritual beings we are remoter from them than they from the knights of chivalry or the citizens of Rome. For this change is a change in the roots of life which in due time will work upward to the flower; or, perhaps more truly, it is a change in the soil of life which has already begun to work upon the roots.

To discover a change so essential one is compelled to look far in history. We are in the midst of a renaissance, a renaissance not of the arts nor the enterprises merely, but a rebirth of human nature. Once before, and once only, in our racial tradition have men reflected in thought and feeling a sun so powerful over the horizons of consciousness—during the early generations after the life and teaching of Christ. Then, as now, the mind lifted itself above the physical condition into the life of real consciousness; then, as now, the power of mind to establish its own reality unlimited by sensuous reality became manifest, a leaven quickening the social lump. The similarity between that age and this may be noted without disregarding their points of difference. For the moment one may be contented to realize that in both instances the racial consciousness was renewed by a universal force, a process coinciding with the decay of one civilization and the appearing of a new. For the Christian this transition was symbolized by the new calendar, a re-dating of time recording men's conviction that spiritually, if not astronomically, the sun had dawned for the first time.

It may be difficult for us now to capture that pristine faith, that pure astonishment and joy, unfounded upon what we please to term "reality" but which significantly enough was at the time shared by the great and the small, leader and follower, artisan with artist, and philosopher with priest. It is difficult for us now to enter into the primitive Christian mind, seizing not only the fulness of its faith but also the fulness of its justification. It is difficult, though we too are undergoing a similar process of spiritual rebirth, for the reason that while we see the evidences of a new light from the heavens of thought, shining from many irrefutable social principles, nevertheless we

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

do not behold these diverse rays streaming from one all-controlling spiritual sun. And this refraction of one light into many colors, though apparently the essential condition of social development, is actually but the result of our own multiplied vision. The real difference between the primitive Christian and the modern well-meaning citizen is that the former's consciousness was unified and concentrated upon one supreme loyalty, while modern thought is divided in the pursuit of many gods.

In this connection I desire to quote certain passages from the works of a Persian exile and teacher, written between the years 1844 and 1892.

"Nothing suffices you to-day, and there is no refuge for any one, save God, the Omniscient, the Wise.

"Verily, the first ordinance of God to humanity is to acquire knowledge of the Source of His Revelation and the Bearer of His Command.

"The progress of man depends upon faithfulness, wisdom, chastity, intelligence and deeds. He is ever degraded by ignorance, lack of faith, untruth and selfishness. Verily, man is not to be called man until he is imbued with the attributes of the Merciful.

"No peace is ordained for thee save by departing from thyself and coming to Me. Verily, thy glory should be in My Name, not in thy name; thy trust upon My Countenance, not upon thine own; for I will to be loved above all that is.

"The acquiring of money for its own sake has kept thee from perceiving the purpose of thy existence. This thou wouldst find is not advisable, wert thou of those who reflect.

"I have created thee rich: why dost thou make thyself poor? Noble have I made thee: why dost thou degrade thyself? Of the essence of Knowledge have I manifested thee: why searchest thou for another than me? From the clay of Love I have kneaded thee: Why seekest thou another? Turn thy sight unto thyself, that thou mayest find Me standing within thee, Powerful, Mighty and Supreme.

"The plain of being is a pleasant plain, if thou dost reach it; the home of Immortality is a goodly home, if thou wilt step

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

beyond the dominion of mortality; the ecstasy of wine is sweet, if thou drinkest it from the Chalice of Inner Significances passed by the hand of the Divine Servant. Shouldst thou attain to these degrees thou shalt become free from mortality, affliction and error.

"Thou art like unto a jewelled sword concealed in a dark sheath, by reason of which its value is unknown to the jewellers. Then come forth from the sheath of self and desire, that thy jewels may become open and manifest to the people of the world.

"O people, it is the duty of each one of you to occupy himself in business of some kind, a craft or profession, which occupation will be regarded in the light of worship in the sight of God, the Truth.

"Marriage hath been established as the union of the spiritual as well as the physical beings. The sign of a true marriage is increase, not only of the race but also the attributes of the soul. That is an eternal marriage, valid throughout all the created worlds.

"All things of the world arise through man and are manifest in him, through whose effort they find life and development; and man is dependent for his real existence upon the Prophet of the Word of God. All the good names and lofty qualities are of the Word. The Word is the fire of God, which glowing in the hearts of men burns away all things that are not of God. The minds of the lovers are ever aflame with this fire. It is the essence of knowledge, manifested in the form of love. Outwardly it is burning love, while inwardly it is steadfast illumination. This is the knowledge which giveth life to all things.

"Glory be upon the people of Glory!"

VI

Reflecting upon these quotations, each statement by itself and with each other, we remark at once that they refer directly to those changes of thought which distinguishes our time and

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

makes it the beginning of a new era. From these facts alone, considering the date this teaching was written, such declarations would be remarkable in that they gather into one clear focus all the yet unassociated best tendencies of the modern world. They raise to the plane of consciousness what were not ideas but tendencies, not a programme but a need. But these quotations are to be examined for another quality as well—that of *authority*. They are not philosophic deductions so much as they are explicit commands. To discover a similar tone and intention of command we must turn from scientist, philosopher and king to him who commanded, saying: "*Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you, that ye may be sons of the father which is in heaven.*" That command went forth and changed the thoughts of philosophers, the dreams of poets, and the hearts of men. It established a pattern for the lives of saints, it gave compensation for the deaths of martyrs. Civilization attempted to raise its codes and its manners to the level of that command as it raised its monuments and its tombs. It went forth over mountain and sea, east and west, north and south, subduing the savage and inspiring the gentle, a light that burned with the amazing brilliance of the sun which overthrows the sterility of winter and inaugurates the fertility of spring; a light that still shines, but as the moon, a light that appeals but compels no more.

How explain this descent from the absolute to the relative, from the universal to the local, from the command to the appeal? On this problem men divide into two groups, one holding to the fact of social evolution as negativing any claim to divine authority, the other clinging to a conviction of divine authority even though apparently incompatible with social evolution. These views are mutually exclusive, but a third idea is possible which reconciles the truth of each attitude. This is the perception that Christ's authority was indeed absolute, but absolute for men only during one cycle of time. It was universal for all kinds and conditions of men, but not universal for all time. Let us recollect that before Christ other prophets had appeared, each absolute with respect to one environment and one epoch which he commanded in the name of a covenant with

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

God, a covenant renewed by a later prophet which he himself foretold. The prophet passed, but the covenant remained. Its renewal was ever on wider and more explicit terms, culminating in the promise of a universal age of peace among the nations of the whole world. In accepting this idea of the prophet's office we do not repudiate the divinity of Christ; on the contrary, we establish it upon the firm basis of social as well as spiritual truth. For those who insist upon Christ as the last and universal prophet, absolute with respect to all future time, succeed only in making Him relative and local with respect to the unity of men. And those who insist upon Christ as relative in point of experience—that is, who deny His divine authority,—can explain his influence only by dismissing as superstitious those who obeyed him during the ages of faith. To many nowadays this appears an easy matter, founded on the belief that with the development of material civilization men themselves have grown from childhood to maturity. But this belief is itself the most unwarranted of superstitions. Its weakness appears directly we follow either of two paths of inquiry. The first path is objective and historical, consisting in the question whether the mental power of the average man of to-day is actually superior to that of men like St. Augustine, Thomas à Kempis, Dante and their peers among the doctors and fathers of the church: an inquiry whose very statement, at least for the student, is its own reply. The second path is subjective and personal, the question whether each one of us is not dimly aware, at least by momentary flashes of insight, of an element in his own being, an element of impulse and perception, which utterly transcends his educated, social self. This inquiry likewise need only be stated to bring its own definite response.

The fact is, the truth about Christ has been obscured by his professional defenders quite as darkly as by his avowed opponents. That truth only appears when we realize that the person of Christ is subordinate to the office of prophethood, and that the Revelation of Christ fulfils several preceding Revelations, and indicates at least two Revelations to come. To close either gate to spiritual continuity is to stagnate the currents of force which make truth a dynamic instead of a mere

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

credence. By isolating the Christian Revelation from its own avowed fulfilment in universal peace, the church militant has been fighting with a broken sword. The interest of scientists and philosophers, who alone can align faith with actuality, has for generations been repulsed by this unintelligent attitude. Too many facts attest the real truth—that Christ came not to bring peace but a sword, but that he promised peace in a future cycle of time. Those who limit a further extension of the Covenant play directly into the hands of those who deny the existence of any spiritual reality at all. But religion opens its gates to the entrance of scientist and philosopher, with all their rational faculties, when each Revelation is considered as but one significant step in a process by which the central spiritual concept, *love,* is gradually extended throughout the wholeness of personal life by being gradually extended throughout the wholeness of social life. Love is but the seed; its flower, gradually released, is unity. Thus our modern passion for political order, economic justice, social equilibrium, is nothing else than the task of religion itself. It seems unreligious because it is not directly concerned with the concept, love, but its religious (or spiritual) basis grows clear when we realize that it is directly concerned with the concept, unity. Those who do not perceive that unity is the flower always potential in the seed of love are the Scribes and Pharisees of this day.

Let us confront once more the fact that as a society we have become aware of new currents of thought so powerful that they are, in coöperation with catastrophe itself, steadily sweeping the whole world forward from an old order to a new. The rationalist accepts this condition as merely the effect of social, that is, material evolution. He conceives them as having arisen from human experience in the same way that science and invention arose. But to establish the new mind upon material evolution alone is to subject it to the laws of material evolution, one of which is progress but another of which is decay. Science gives us surgery one day, but the next day it gives us the submarine.

The author of the passages quoted above was the Persian who adopted the name "Baha'o'llah," which means the Glory

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of God, as Christ means the Anointed of God. His teaching has already been accepted as Revelation by members of every race and creed in the world. He has brought reconciliation to the irreconcilable—the Jew and the Christian, the Mohammedan and the Zoroastrian, the Parsee and the Buddhist. He has been an inspiration to the devout, an instruction to the intelligent, a command to the strong. To him as to a common centre has begun to turn the conscious hope of men for unity and peace, finding in him a steadfast conviction that unity and peace shall be. From him, as from a sun in the spiritual world, has begun to radiate the forces of renewal in the life peculiar to men, the spiritual life. His teaching opens the symbolic meaning of all the sacred books, allying them all to one common process of spiritual evolution, an evolution hitherto separated by the differences of racial tradition but now meeting in one common stream. His Word likewise possesses the power always wielded by the authors of Revelation, that of awakening the soul to a realization of its own latent faculties. This Revelation fulfils the Covenant by establishing religion in terms of unity. As the authority of Christ was twofold, resting upon the conviction of the awakened soul as well as upon its own independent perfection, so the authority of Baha'o'llah is twofold, attested by the facts of social evolution as well as by the recognition of those possessing independent spiritual insight. The obvious task of religion in this age is to create a new mind, a mind capable of transcending political and racial antagonism by transcending those instinctive habits of thought from which antagonisms are born and nourished; and a mind responding freely and fearlessly to spiritual law by its power of reconciling spiritual law with social exigency. That task has already been begun. In Baha'o'llah the two principal paths of thought, one laid down by the experience of men in society, the other laid down by the experience of men with their own imperfect selves, meet and join. *Glory be upon the people of Glory!*

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

AT THE END OF THE ROAD

WALTER J. MUILENBURG

THE latter part of the summer found me tramping through the heavy, grey dust of a road in southern Iowa, so tired that I scarcely felt the hunger that had bitten me in the morning. Now, at noon, the hot, August sun sent its untempered rays down upon me as though it, too, united with all the world in fiery hatred for the wanderer upon the open road. Once I had seen romance in the long trail that always beckoned alluringly from the thin, indefinite distance where it touched the horizon but, though I had pursued with high hopes, the horizon ever lay beyond and left its promise unfulfilled. Now its mystery, the mystery of the unattainable, mocked me as I sweltered in the suffocating heat of a burning earth. The dim, green fields I had dreamed of, where Freedom reigned, were still far away. I was sick of it all. Life could not be solved so simply.

This unhappy trend of my thoughts was broken when I rounded a curve in the road and saw to the northwest a small, woody town lying somnolent under the hot, noon sun of August. From a grove on the outskirts of the village came the unmistakeable tunes of a merry-go-round. Ah, here was a chance to pick up a little money to tide me on my way!

I quickly reached the edge of the grove, and ducked under a single strand of wire that doubtless marked the sacred precincts of celebration. Now the rising and falling hum of a large concourse of people struck me pleasantly, for I liked the impersonal companionship of crowds.

As I made my way through the trees, I saw that it was the typical country town celebration which had become familiar to me in my wanderings. The daughters dressed too gaudily and the mothers too sombrely. The men stood about in groups, smoking and discussing their crops. Everywhere, alone or in groups, swaggered small boys, exhibiting large satisfaction in unreproved stickiness and in the wide choice of indigestibles. Nevertheless, it struck me now, as it always did, that there was

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

an undercurrent of weariness running through the whole crowd. Released for a day from the midsummer drudgery of the farm, their senses were too dull to appreciate such a change.

Finally, I reached the row of stands where all kinds of foods and drinks were dispensed to the hungry and thirsty swarm of people. My request for a job was repeatedly refused after a single glance at my disreputable attire. At last I reached a hamburger stand at the end of the line. The two proprietors were plainly having a hard time in handling the crowd. Here I was quickly hired for the day.

I threw off my coat and donned a greasy apron. It was fine to get back on the old job again, I thought, as I slapped sizzling hamburgers between unbuttered buns. The noise of the crowd, insistently surging about us, seemed comforting.

The balloon ascension in the early afternoon gave me leisure to study my employers. The one who had given me the job was short and fat, with tight-fitting trousers of greenish hue showing beneath the apron he wore. Of Teutonic origin, surely. His face reflected his nationality, a red nose issuing bluntly from heavy cheeks and light blue eyes, crowned by a bald head that gleamed palely out of a fringe of sandy hair. Seeing me observing him, he came up and announced that he was Dutch Frank. Then he turned to his partner, a tall, loose-limbed, grey-faced and grey-haired man who impressed me as prematurely old from dissipation. Out of the dark-rimmed hollows falling deeply from the high cheek-bones, his eyes, filled with a wide, hungry abstraction, stared out through the branches of the leaves about us.

"Let me," said Dutch Frank, expansively, "give you a knock-down to my revered partner in this noble enterprise. His name is Bill and he's got the tastes of a Kentucky colonel—he takes his whiskey raw."

"Howdy!" Bill's face remained expressionless as he extended a limp hand toward me. "Why don't y' ever forget that old spiel of yours, Frank?" he concluded in moody expostulation.

The conversation gradually dropped off. Bill again withdrew into himself and gazed with lack-lustre eyes into the air.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Frank sat on a barrel of cider and smoked a pipe in stoical enjoyment.

The respite from labor soon ended and the hot, tired mob once more surrounded us. The air grew damp and fetid. Strong above the spiciness of hamburger came the sickening odor of peanuts in process of mastication. The noise of celebration rolled up and enveloped us. Next to our stand, a dark-skinned vendor of fruits and cold drinks bawled out incessantly to the restless throng and his words became wearyingly familiar to me through constant repetition. "Come on over, folks, come on over. We'll treat yuh right. Don't yuh ever git hongry? Don't yuh ever git tired?" The bellow ended in a note of ineffable sorrow. Then, chancing to spy some attractive face in the crowd, he cried out in an insinuating tone, "Oh, you Lizzie, there . . . you with the bright blue eyes. Won't y' come over and talk awhile? I'm the pride of the state o' Bingville, America's fav'rite son." The girl giggled and tried to assume a demure expression, but her embarrassment caused her face to draw up into rather terrifying contortions. "Why, you poor little son-of-a-gun!" exclaimed her admirer in a voice that mingled pity and contempt. "Say, ain't these corn-feds a nice bunch?" he grinned at me as I came up to borrow a box.

Time passed swiftly. Though we could not see the sun, we knew that it was declining, for the oppressive, stale heat of the day was swept from under the trees by the cool, wet breeze of evening, which held the peculiar smell of dew fallen on dust. From the neighboring meadow, to the north, came the pungent smell of wild hay. Then the sun fell to the level of the horizon, threw a dim red curtain over the west, and faded away. After the work and grime of the day, twilight came restfully.

I heard a movement at my side and, turning, saw Bill leaning on the counter, chin resting in his palm, his wide grey eyes filled with the dreamy, troubled stare I had noticed in the early afternoon.

"Well, Bill, what do you think of it?" He remained silent, looking sombrely into the distance. Finally he said, irrelevantly,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"See that yellow strip out there in the west? It's so clear, almost wet—like whiskey." He moved a little closer. His voice, though low, quivered tensely, almost out of control. "Oh, I wish this burg wasn't dry—I got t' have a drink!" I noticed that all the softness had fled from the eyes and a hard, desperate eagerness lay there instead. His hands grasped the edge of the counter so hard that the veins stood out blue and snake-like in the ghastly yellow skin. "I guess I'm all in, Bo," he concluded, and as I saw again the grey face I believed him.

Lights began to appear. The merry-go-round blazed with color and its unending discord seemed to beat uselessly against the faint line of darkness that hurled the jarring tunes back upon us derisively. In the narrow belt of light the crowd moved restlessly, after its short rest at meal time. The older men and women had gone home with the children and only the young people remained. As evening grew, they threw off all restraint. Groups of heavy-faced farmer boys swaggered past and cried out familiarly to the young women they met. These answered back as roughly and usually occasioned a roar of laughter by their sharply personal replies. Then liquor began to flow from some unseen source. The crowd divided into groups, all anxious for a fight. Several times we narrowly avoided trouble by Frank's seasoned diplomacy. Suddenly I noticed that Bill had disappeared.

After an hour the work became pressing. On all sides, the mob clamored. The cool night air became warm and stifling. The mixture of odors struck like a blow. Above the general smell of hamburger and fruit, rose the heavy fumes of whiskey and cheap perfume.

In a lull, when the capricious throng had ebbed away, I rested against the counter and looked up through the leaves into the night sky. How strange it seemed suddenly to feel the peaceful beauty of the night, with the twinkling stars shining so silently in their ebony setting, so indifferent and untouched by the brutishness raging about us. As the wind stirred the leaves, it brought the cool touch of fog, gathered, I fancied, from some grassy hollow where fireflies burned their tiny lanterns of green and yellow.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Immersed in pleasant revery, I did not at once notice Bill come in until he coughed. He leaned upon the counter beside me and looked into the darkness. His eyes shone with a warm light and a faint color touched his cheeks.

"Resting, are yuh?" he asked sociably, turning toward me.

His breath came to me heavy with the fumes of whiskey. We stood there for a long time. I was too tired to talk. Bill seemed to indulge in pleasant retrospection.

"Well, Bill," I spoke lazily, "how do you like this kind of a life?"

His expression changed swiftly. "Rotten!" he exclaimed, so vehemently that I was startled.

"How did you get into such work, then?"

He settled himself more firmly against an empty barrel. "I started when I was a kid," he began, in his low monotone. "My folks didn't want me around so I got t' work. Found a job with a guy that sold hot dogs on circuit fairs. Afterwards, I knocked about, but I liked the crowds so I went into cahoots with Dutch Frank. We tried skin games for awhile, but the law got pretty tight so we started a hamburger outfit." He stopped. We were silent once more. The crowd had slowly deserted us until only a few stragglers walked uneasily. The night had crept in closer, and now, as its silence came to us, the yellow tawdriness of the lights seemed incongruous beside the softer darkness of nature. I looked at my watch. Eleven o'clock. An hour more before the lights went out.

"Tell you what." Bill had evidently been thinking back into his life. "I'm goin' to cut out all this pretty soon." He came closer and spoke confidentially. "I got a girl up to Peoria, Illinois. When she was just a little runt, I found her on the streets, about half froze. Took her to where I stayed and fed her good. Then, when me 'n Frank went out on the circuits, she stayed with an old woman who took care of her. Gee, she got to be the purtiest little kid you ever seen. The boys laughed at me and says I was an old fool, but I tell you they was pretty nice to her when she happened around."

He fell into a fit of retrospection.

"What then?"

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"When she was eighteen, she run away." He commenced abruptly. "It just about busted me up, I guess. I started boozing pretty strong then and one night I got the D. T.'s bad. Then she come back. She felt so mean about it that I didn't say anything. I couldn't anyway—I was too glad. After that, she was as straight as a string. Went to church too. She always wanted me to quit work and let her take care o' me but I wouldn't do it. And then, I was tryin' to cut the booze first. So I went ahead with Frank—but I guess I'll go on the water-wagon soon. Say," he lowered his voice slightly, "I got a letter from her a couple o' days ago. She wrote that she was goin' t' be married to a fine young fellow and that they was goin' t' run a little truck farm just outside of Peoria. And she says, 'Dad, we got it all fixed up. You got t' throw up your work and come and live with us. You're goin' t' get the warmest room in the house—on the south side. Besides, we need you to take care of the chickens.' What do you know about that!" He laughed deep in his throat. "An old cuss like me feeding chickens. But see me beat it to that little farm as soon as the season's over. Can't jump my contract with my partner, y' know."

I was filled with a peculiar pity for the old man, a pity mixed with pleasure in his good-fortune. Surely he needed the care of a kind daughter. Out there on the farm, wearing faded blue overalls, surrounded by grunting swine and bawling calves—I smiled—Bill would certainly look out of place there.

Slowly, as the place became deserted, the lights winked out, one by one, until our stand alone stood out in the gloom. Everything seemed asleep. I walked over to where Frank lay dozing in the grass. Happening to glance behind me, I caught Bill hastily removing a bottle from his lips. So he was drinking again! Oh, well, let him go to the devil in his own way.

I went to Frank and asked if I might retire for the night.

"Sure," he grunted sleepily. "You'll find a couple of blankets in that box yonder. You can lay right here if you ain't afraid of sleepin' on the ground."

I unfolded the blankets and had hardly touched them before oblivion seized my senses. From this sleep I was wakened by

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a kick in the ribs. "Get up!" Frank was yelling at me, "and beat it to a doctor."

"What's the matter?" I asked, drowsily.

"Bill's run wild—half crazy with booze."

Grabbing my coat, which I had been using as a pillow, I stumbled out into the darkness, but hesitated as an awful cry came from behind me. In it sounded such unutterable fear that I stopped, shivering.

"Float along!" Frank's voice had a desperate note in it. "He's workin' into a fit again."

It seemed a long way to the town, and my shoes were soon soaked with dew which afterwards caked into mud as I struck the grey, dusty wraith of road. Even then, I felt the comfortable security of a dry road in the cold, wet darkness and appalling silence of late night. By rare luck, I met a belated traveller who directed me to the doctor's residence.

After I had pounded on the door until my knuckles were raw, the doctor finally appeared. When I stated my case, he seemed pleased in a leisurely way at the strangeness of it all.

"Hurry, please!" I urged, growing angry. He seized his case and I could hear the muffled thudding of his feet behind me in the dust of the road.

When we arrived at the stand, Frank came from behind a tree. He was mopping his face vigorously.

"The old cuss's crazy!" he groaned. "Go in there once and see."

Inside of the stand, Bill lay on the blanket that I had vacated. His eyes, red and blood-shot, glared wildly at us. Like a tired, beaten dog, he whined in his throat. Then he began to mumble in a rising voice until it came as a prolonged scream. "Look!" he cried, clutching at the darkness with his skinny talons. "See, it's tryin' to get me. You devil——!" He fought madly with some invisible horror. His face twisted into awful lines. Perspiration glistened on his forehead, but his face was ashen pale. He lay silent for a moment, sobbing. Then, without warning, his voice rose into a wild scream so full of unfathomed terror that the doctor looked fearfully about him into the darkness. I felt my finger nails cutting into my palms. But Bill

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

was subsiding and, at last, lay in a stupor. The doctor bent over him for a few moments and then arose. "Delirium Tremens," he announced, with a gesture of helplessness. Then he added, "A fool—such a fool." Encouraged by seeing that we were listening respectfully to him, he swore with the careful pride of a man who knows how to swear virtuously.

"Pretty bad, Doc?" Frank asked mildly.

"He's got a weak heart," answered the doctor shortly; "probably he won't recover from this."

I suddenly thought of the pretty girl in Peoria who was going to repay Bill's kindness at last—but too late. For her, too, life would resolve itself into darkness.

"Poor little kid," I murmured, "—and poor old Bill."

They looked at me questioningly, so I told them about the letter Bill had received from his adopted daughter. The doctor stalked about in great sympathy. Frank seemed unmoved. I felt a hot anger against him. He noted this and grinned.

"So he told you that story too, did he?" Frank spoke in a curious tone. "He always does that when he's soused."

"It wasn't true?" I exclaimed.

"Oh, he picked up a fool kid from the streets once but she ran away with a travelling man. When Bill is tight with booze, he's got it all fixed up. Poor old devil—she never come back."

We were silent after that. The far, crystal-clear notes of the whip-poor-will came to us faintly like the impersonal, haunting presence of the night, which seemed passively to behold the tragedy of life, sorrowing at it, but unable to help. The gloom deepened about us and slowly the lifeless chill of grey dawn wound its tenuous fingers about us as we sat in the yellow flare of light, stupidly considering the futile struggles of the broken man lying in our midst.

I was sick with the heaviness of my senses. I remembered the Open Road; its promise of freedom had led to this—the painted lure of life and youth was but the mask of wanton death.

And in the east, dawn gathered in a cloudless sky that promised another hot day.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ELEGY IN 1915. (B.H.W.)

HAROLD MONRO

I CALL you, and I call you. Oh come home,
You lonely creature. Cursèd be the clown
Who plugged you with that lead, and knocked you down.
Stand up again and laugh, you wandering friend;
Say, as you would: "It's just a little hole;
It will soon mend."
Walk now into the room. Come! Come! Come! Come!

Come! we will laugh together all the night.
(I shall have poured you out a glass or two.)
Sit down. Our mutual mirth shall reach its height
When we remember how they called you dead,
And I shall ask you how it felt, and you—
"Oh nothing. Just a tumble. Rather hot,
The feeling in my side; and then my head
A trifle dizzy, but I'm back again.
I lay there rather long, and I've still got,
When I think of it, just a little pain."

I know the way you stumbled . . . Once you slid
And landed on your side. I noticed then
A trick of falling; some peculiar glide—
A curious movement, not like other men.
But did your mouth drop open? Did your breath
Hurt you? What sort of feeling quickly came,
When you discovered that it might be death?

And what will happen if I shout your name?
Perhaps you may be there behind the door,
And if I raise my voice a little more,
You'll swing it open. I don't know how thick
The black partition is between us two.
You may be there, there almost, coming quick. . . .
Listen, the door-bell rang! Perhaps it's you.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

You're in the room. You're sitting in that chair.
You are! . . . I will go down. It *was* the bell.
You *may* be waiting at the door as well;
And what a shout I'll give if you are there . . .

They've rigged you in your uniform to-day;
You take a momentary martial stand,
Then step inside and hold me out your hand,
And laugh in that old solitary way.

You don't know why you did it. All this while
You've slaved and sweated. Now you're very strong,
And so you tell me with a knowing smile:
"We're off to Flanders before long."
I thought you'd come back with an ugly hole
Below your thigh,
And ask for sympathy and wander lame;
I thought you'd be the same
Grumbling companion without self-control—
I never thought you'd die.

Now let us both forget this brief affair;
Let us begin our friendship all again.
I'm going down to meet you on the stair.
Walk up. Come! Come! for I can see you plain.
How strange! A moment I did think you dead.
How foolish of me!
Friend! friend! Are you dumb?
Why are you pale? Why do you hang your head?
You see me? Here's my hand. Why don't you come?
Don't make me angry. You are there, I know.
Is not my house your house? There is a bed
Upstairs. You're tired. Lie down; you must come home.
Some men are killed . . . not you. Be as you were.
And yet—Somehow it's dark down all the stair.
I'm standing at the door. You are not there.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

REMY DE GOURMONT'S CRITICISM OF MORALITY

ROBERT ALLERTON PARKER

REMY DE GOURMONT lived, thought, wrote and passed away without creating more than a ripple of evanescent attention on this side of the Atlantic. Three or four obscure lines in our metropolitan dailies sufficed to announce his death to the American public. English and American translators—with possibly two exceptions—never dreamed it expedient to present his works to the Anglo-Saxon reader. The reputation of the distinguished founder of the *Mercure de France* among us is confined, perhaps not without reason, to that of poet, critic, novelist, philologist—a second-hand reputation, nebulously and invidiously "literary." Remy de Gourmont the moralist—the immoralist if you prefer—never passed the censorship of our translators. This was not due, I am sure, to carelessness, ignorance, or lack of judgment. It is an example of a profound understanding of the cultured American and British reader: we prefer our "ethics" not in the form of high-powered explosives, but alloyed with religiosity and sentimentality, and primarily as a harmless stimulant to the emotion of righteousness.

Yet freedom was the dynamic idea in Remy de Gourmont's ethics, as it is in ours. He, too, was a lover of liberty. But this restless analyst of ideas was not content to accept freedom as a mere catchword; he was the exponent of freedom in every field of life. His whole thought might be termed an adventure in freedom. He re-defined and re-created liberty. He makes you think of freedom as a little cultivated oasis in the vast desert of the universe; our task, as was his, is to extend, enlarge, protect this oasis. Liberty, moreover, is a luxury—there are few to taste its pleasures. And as one progresses in comprehension of Remy de Gourmont's ethics, one comes to see with him that one must accept the principle of freedom *in toto,* or reject it altogether. Freedom in one field of life is commingled and dependent upon freedom in every other sphere. Freedom in life is the essential condition to freedom of thought. We must be

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

free "even to play with fire." Prudence is the outgrowth of human conduct: it is useless to impose it on the world.

One may scent danger here. But de Gourmont continues to juggle his intellectual bombs, tossing them one after the other into the ancient structure of Christian morality. Remind him that freedom is essentially a negative idea, that his thought is not "constructive," and you would receive the benignly ironic reply that the intelligence is primarily an excellent implement of negation: one cannot build palaces with pickaxes and torches. It is not necessary—in fact it is fatal—to substitute new beliefs for old. On the other hand, he emphasized the sufficiency and the beauty of transmuting accepted truths into non-truths. The superior mission of criticism, he pointed out, was not merely to sow the seeds of doubt, as Pierre Bayle claimed; criticism must go even further—it must destroy, it must become incendiary.

It may strike the disciples of traditional idealism that such an interpretation of criticism—of thought itself—is completely ignoble and absolutely lacking in dignity. If so, a further and greater shock is in store for them. Remy de Gourmont considered thinking a sport—perhaps the greatest of all human sports. He looked upon the pleasures of thinking with Epicurean—not to say Aristippean—eyes. The purpose of thought is not to arrive at new beliefs, not even to purge old ones of contradiction. With Pascal he was of the opinion that contradiction was not a mark of false thinking, nor the lack of contradiction a mark of truth. He made an art of scepticism. The exercise of the intelligence, he suggests, instead of increasing the sum of human certainties, decreases it. The error of humanity—yet perhaps not an error at all—lies in believing. His method of analyzing religious belief would be no less displeasing to the professional agnostic or atheist than to the adherents of the church; possibly much more so. Irreligion is itself a religion. To curse or to rail at religious "superstition" is a confession of one's own sectarianism. The eternal religion is a matter of eternal belief. Religion is a form of therapeutics: it goes further, it cures more complex ailments—with more naïve methods—than modern medicine. "Religion cures that vague spiritual inquietude of simple souls; and that is very beautiful." Belief is obedience.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Obedience is the great opiate. No opium is its equal in producing a happy slavery. Before the supreme irony of modern science, all religious beliefs are the same, and all dogmas.

Fear not, then, the subversive influence of such ironical ethics, when men are so willing to believe, especially in America, in each current catchword or catch phrase, to believe with such whole-souled obedience. An entire mythology is flourishing under our very eyes, Remy de Gourmont said. Those who are busy preparing and publishing dissertations on the origins of gods are unaware of the new saints and new divinities who are lurking in the shadows of the present, who are being created in our own image to-day. Those who have driven out the old saints and divinities have merely made room for new ones. Study the present; thus you shall learn the past. "What is to-day only an elementary fact of psychology was nothing more mysterious in earlier centuries. Men have not yet been taught to live in the present: indeed, the present is repugnant to them. Some turn toward the past; others, eternally open-mouthed, turn toward the future, that ironic heaven. Having established what they choose to call the laws of history, which are, in brief, nothing else than the logical co-ordination of their wishes, these dreamers solemnly arrange the to-morrow of days they are forgetting to live. As though there were a future! As if the future could be seen as future, as if life ever realized itself outside of the present, of the very moment at which sensation lets us know that we are alive!"

The Future—here certainly is one of the divinities created during the past century! How we gallop toward it, riding the broomstick hobbies of Socialism, Science, Eugenics, Birth Control—frantic Childe Rolands! Better, advises Remy de Gourmont in the rôle of a "humble passerby," try to fix in our nerves the sensation of a fugitive present. Yet there is slight danger for the masses to embrace the immoral doctrines of Epicurus, still less of this Aristippus of the intellect. The masses will always be mastered by those who promise a paradise. De Gourmont commends Nietzsche's ideas concerning the pedlers of paradises. Selling the future has always been a good business—a noble business even—when you believe in it. Yet the more "sci-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

entific," the more plausible these Futures—these Utopias—become, the greater is his reaction against them. With Goethe he laughs at efforts to create a happy humanity out of men whose individual happiness has first been eradicated.

Freedom is the animating force of the intelligence, as he points out in *Physique de l'Amour*. There are two characteristic sets of activity in human conduct. There is that series which tends to conserve and perpetuate the existing condition of things, custom and habit, to which we are subjected in most of our acts. On the other hand there is the small realm of freedom, the limited power to make choices, to experiment with life. The exercise of this power to discriminate, to distinguish, is that of the intelligence. Nothing novel in this view, surely, until Remy de Gourmont applies it to the destruction of all abstract moralities, which he classifies as retrograde. They tend to create men of a single pattern, imitating an ancient character. "Because a carpenter of Judea . . . fled from women or wished to have them only as servants, people have come to look upon love as a crime; and because he lived as a parasite, that money is an evil; and because he was of humble origin, that the pride of race and the pride of family is ridiculous." Looked at from this point of view, obedience to any absolute morality is an ethical malady. Virtue, in the conventional sense, may mean moral stagnation; vice in the same sense may indicate vigorous health and growth. Sacrifice is the most repugnant of crimes. Moral anguish is a sign of degeneracy. Conscience, duty, remorse—blots on the 'scutcheon.

The dissolution of traditional Christian morality was started not by attacks from non-believers, but by the Jesuit casuists of the sixteenth century. They were the precursors, according to the erudite de Gourmont, of the modern "ethics of the dust"—the new experimental morality so admirably expounded by Professor Holt in *The Freudian Wish and its Place in Ethics*. They were not only in advance of their own century, but in many respects they were in advance of ours. Unconsciously perhaps they realized that there must be as many moralities as there are individuals, or at least groups of characters and temperaments. The Absolute is fatal to health. Traditional morality

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

may be reassuring to many; but undoubtedly it paralyzes as many more. Perhaps the victims of virtue outnumber the victims of vice. These Jesuits, Remy de Gourmont informs us, recognized the futility of preaching an inapplicable morality. The human race is not made up of heroes; and besides, heroes create their own morality. Escobar and his fellow casuists represented, with all their faults and subterfuges—and de Gourmont made no attempt to minimize the latter—the sanest and most acceptable phase of Christianity. They tried to accommodate its blighting principles to the necessities of life. Antoine Escobar, Baltasar Gracian, and the rest defended freedom in living, "the essential condition for freedom in thinking," against the negative virtues of an absolute morality. This was a tremendous contribution to the ethics of freedom.

If Remy de Gourmont's English and American critics could understand the dominating position of freedom in his vision—both of life and of thought—they would not speak in such a scandalized and disapproving fashion of his "preoccupation with Sex." Love is the very heart of life, according to Gourmont. And to understand why he returns always to this theme one must reiterate and emphasize the one truth he never seemed to wish to negate—that the restriction of freedom, the suppression of liberty in one sphere of human activity inevitably reacts upon the liberty in every other. Instead of treating sex frivolously, his most eloquent and profound pages are devoted to Love. He attempted to divest Love of the theological and medical swaddling clothes into which it has been swathed and bound for centuries. We must come to look upon Love *sub specie aeternitatis*—as though Love's golden age still reigned. He wished men and women to reconquer its essence, instead of stopping at its superficial and passing aspects. There is almost nothing permanent in human society, he wrote. Everything changes and modifies—everything except the relations of the sexes. Here we come upon the very heart of life, "its cause and its end, interlaced like an undecipherable figure" (*un chiffre indéchiffrable*). Life is maintained by that very act which is the aim of life.

How then can we look upon this eternal mystery as obscene, as a vice, as a sin? Remy de Gourmont accepts Love reverently

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and completely. To attempt to regulate Love, to pass petty laws making it legitimate or illegitimate, honorable or dishonorable —here is the real danger. Such legislation and censorship is bound to react not only upon our bodies but upon our intelligence as well. Intellectual freedom, he reiterates, is closely bound up with the freedom of sensation. Literature, art, philosophy, even science, in short every human gesture bespeaking intelligence, are inseparably joined with feeling. To regain the golden age of Love—he suggests that such an age may have existed in Europe before the discovery of America, which he intimates was not an unqualified blessing for Europeans—freedom is offered as the only possible path; not the false freedom of promiscuity, nor that slavery which masks itself as "free love," but individual freedom to experiment, a freedom out of which prudence and joy may blossom. Remy de Gourmont never ceased to pillory those meddlers who insist upon tampering with an expression of which they know nothing. He used to quote Baudelaire's subtle warning against those who wished "*aux choses de l'amour mêler de l'honnêteté.*"

His conception of Love, it is hardly necessary to add, is not for the Young Girl. But then, why submit to the Young Girl? Remy de Gourmont discusses her at length. He reveals her as a tyrant, a kittenish corrupter of all social values, a poisoner of true literature and art. She stands simpering in the background, swaying a tremendously disproportionate power over artists and thinkers. She must be "protected": therefore those huge industries for the production of vapid plays and novels have arisen, while the productions of genius have been suppressed. De Gourmont cites the prosecution of Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* as the classic example; *Mlle. de Maupin* was really the expression of a revolt against this amorphous creature, and such revolts have been all too few. But on the other hand, our critic suggests, history has been rewritten for her, innumerable masterpieces bowdlerized, the very business of publishing books revolutionized. Remy de Gourmont is of course speaking only of conditions in France, yet one is not without a vague suspicion that the influence of the Young Girl has not been entirely negligible in the United States. The irony of her power lies in the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

fact that this social type is distinctly a product of the last two centuries, created by the system of late marriages—a system not without financial and mercenary aspects. At least ten years, on an average, are stolen out of a young woman's life, certainly with no appreciable benefit to herself or society; usually indeed, if the great French critic is right, with devastating harm to both. His solution of the problem of the education of the Young Girl is novel in at least one suggestion; feminists, or any one who cares to look, may find it in one of the last essays of *Le Chemin de Velours*.

I hope that it is now evident that Remy de Gourmont's Epicureanism is not to be lightly cast aside, that this healthy physiological egoism is not without aspects of deep spirituality. A restatement of the salient ideas of this brilliant modern thinker must necessarily strip them of that individuality and eloquent strength, that grace and fluidity, given them by his style and his admirable art. Remy de Gourmont did not merely restate the ideas of Nietzsche, nor is his egoism a reflection of that of Max Stirner. There is no anger in the voice of Remy de Gourmont, but there is a calm mastery of his fact; there is never any straining for an effect or for a conviction. He claimed to be only an amateur in thought, a humble bystander; nevertheless, he lived a life which seems to justify his definition of egoism and of charity—for charity and egoism, he maintained, are the same thing; the only true charity is the act of the conscious person who lives according to his own personality and according to the rules of his subjective and individual logic. Such a person gives all that he has and all that he is. "The greatest charity is thus to live and to consent to be that spot of yellow or lacquer in the field, and to limit one's rôle to those relations that one *nuance* ought to have with other *nuances*. One should become conscious of the color of one's life, of its movement; one should maintain the succession of life's phenomena, the activity of one's intelligence. In this manner may a man become a god, his own God; and once having become his own God he may attain the summit of all charity—which is the love of one's self which implies the giving of one's self. To love is to give; to love one's self is to

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

give one's self. Love and egoism are one, the ego and non-ego merge in this experience, this consciousness of the infinite."

Sophistry? Yes, perhaps Remy de Gourmont, with his dissociation of ideas, his campaign against literature of the rubber stamp, his amusing splitting of hairs—which revealed the keenness of his intellect—was in fact a modern Sophist. But he who reads his dialogues, his essays, his *A Night in the Luxembourg*, for their content no less than their form, must then accept for Remy de Gourmont that definition of the Sophist one may find in one of the Dialogues of Plato: "He purges the soul from beliefs that are a hindrance to knowledge, and especially from the ignorance which consists in thinking one knows what one does not know." Do we not need a few Sophists of this type in America?

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"MORITURI SALUTAMUS"

WILLARD HUNTINGTON WRIGHT

AN extraordinary season of art activities, and one which in many ways has been an inspiration and a revelation to a large number of people, was brought to a close by the exhibition of the National Academy of Design. The forces of the "majority" were here brought together in one grand saturnalia of sentimentality, bad craftsmanship, incompetent drawing and crude insensitive color. For ninety-one years the school painters have thus presented us annually with their inept imitations, their pictorial anecdotes, their photographic portraits, their pale green moonlights, their brown cows and their great expanses of flat sky. And always have these gentlemen and ladies rigidly kept a half century behind the progress of the rest of the world. Not one of them has been aware of the possibilities of their medium; they have contented themselves with the methods of past generations, peacefully blind to all the manifestations of æsthetic evolution. Many of them have made large reputations—some even for boldness and audacity—as a result of the insularity and ignorance of their public.

Unfortunately these painters have been met with practically no opposition. The critics, reflecting the stupidities of the laymen, have awarded the Academy exposers with salvos of applause. The impact of untutored opinion has forced the art journals into a state of conservative chlorosis; and there has grown up round our annual exhibition of academicians a kind of reverence and sacred awe, until now any word of adverse criticism takes on an air of blasphemy. So strong has this superstition grown, so great a respect attaches to it, so firmly implanted is it in the public mind, that any effort at telling the truth about the pictures of this exhibition would no doubt be dismissed as the outpourings of a mind entirely incapable of reacting to true beauty. And yet, knowing this, I cannot refrain from registering a protest against the worthlessness of the canvases of the Academy show. I have seen all manner of academic exhibitions in Europe, but never under one roof have I beheld so

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

large a number of inept and insignificant efforts as are to be found this year at the National Academy of Design.

The great majority of the artisans represented are struggling with methods which were perfected and laid aside before the advent of Delacroix; while the most advanced and revolutionary of the painters have only recently come to know of that strange and heretical, and to most people incomprehensible, school called Impressionism which astounded the world before the Franco-Prussian war! Ah, the bravado of these radicals who have come abreast of Monet and Pissarro! What stalwart wills they must possess to place highly-colored draperies behind the brown and licked faces of their sitters, thus giving their work that "modern" aspect which was anathema in 1848! To understand the full import of their iconoclasm it is only necessary to study the environmental pictures—pictures which could bear the date 17—without suggesting an anachronism. America's reverence for the dead and buried seems ineradicable. Our painters spend their days in an effort to make viable the corpses of the past: the new is as poison to our systems. In the Academy exhibition we find the sublimation of this attitude, bodied forth in hundreds of canvases, not one of which has added anything to the world of art, or has so much as made an attempt to carry forward the banner of a new ideal. Without exception the painters are petty imitators, content with doing over again, in a vastly inferior manner, that which has been done before. You may look in vain for the slightest evidence of originality, for the most rudimentary understanding of the principles on which all great art is based, for even that superficial mastery of the craft of painting which is possessed by European academicians.

As one walks through these three rooms of meagre and inefficient exhibits, trying to drag one's eyes away from the large wreath of immortels which the jury has hung on one wall to indicate the undying beauty of the works on view, there is no feeling that any one of the exhibitors is even aware of the true problems of æsthetics. There is evidenced no intellectual struggle, no seeking for new paths, no experimentation in means. The only problems which confront these complacent artisans when they stand before their easels have to do with the super-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ficial and nugatory aspects of painting. Shall they place a crazy-quilt or merely a white spread on the bed of the dying child? Shall flounders or trout be used in their still-lives? How many gold-fish shall they place in the bowl? Should Indian red or merely burnt sienna be used to paint their cows? Should the stars, with which they dot their vast expanse of dirty blue in the masterpiece of *Young Love Quaffing from the Cup of Life,* be laid on with pale yellow ochre or just white? . . .

Such are the agonizing questions which torture our New World Bouguereaus. And when, at last, the decision is made, what is the result? Nothing more important than an unemotional reflection of what we have seen in nature thousands of times and will see thousands more. I have never understood why men and women seek to reproduce, by manual execution, a section of nature which is free to every one. Surely the scene is not improved upon, for these copyists know naught of composition or color harmony. Not one of them in the present exhibition has approached the truth or beauty of a good photograph. And the portraits! What possible branch of paralogy has convinced these busy-bodies that their paintings of persons possess a value over and beyond the results of a good camera cleverly manipulated? Can it be that these portraitists still regard the tricks of distortion in the old-fashioned light of esoteric trait-probing? I have seen photographs by Arnold Genthe which, both as likenesses and as works of art, are superior to any paint portrait in the Academy show. Cézanne made portraiture an art. But Cézanne cared nothing for the sitter. He was interested in the picture only as an æsthetic organization. But the academicians will not know of Cézanne and his deeper problems for many years to come.

Only on the surface do the exhibitors in the present show differ from one another. Their individuality goes no deeper than technique. They are splittings of the same hair. Certain of the painters apply their pigment in great crude lumps: each object in the picture is an excuse for a handful of palette scrapings. Thus is a reputation for strength made. Then there is the scraped half-figure, half-portrait arrangement which looks dry and hard and labored. Such pictures are often abused by the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

knife to give them the effect of sincerity—that ultimate proof of the painters' artistic genuineness. Again we have the "flesh-that-sweats" contingent, whose delineations are all swept in with wide brushing, carelessly, nonchalantly, to give the impression of great mastery, of absolute dominance over the medium. These men paint their pictures as easily as the layman butters bread in summer. Closely allied to this slap-dash school are those powerful creatures who ruggedly outline their objects in black. They would have the awed beholder believe that they painted stripped to the waist, a bandana about their heads, a saber clanking against their sea-boots. For is their work not labelled: "Here is strength, brutal, aggressive strength"? Still again there is the school of pale washed-out pastel colorists who always depict small dancing figures in hazy dells, poetic interpretations of Washington Square Verlaines—a call to lyric introspection and languid day-dreaming.

These, however, do not represent all the different tendencies, but they are the principal ones which grace the walls of most academic exhibitions. Beneath this technical surface the pictures are not dissimilar as to aspiration and intent. Seek for differentiation in thought, in attitude, or in problem; and you will seek in vain. Very often the same method is used in naming pictures. Every Academy show has a certain number of canvases whose titles are taken from some obscure object hidden in the folds of a dress or lost in the haze of the background. Sometimes the subject is only implied. I mention this fact as characteristic of the imitative scholastic mind. In the present show we have several examples of this titular hide-and-seek: for instance, Olinsky's *Fire Gods,* Lewis's *A Rainy Day,* Hildebrandt's *The Chinese Fan,* Vinton's *Spring.* . . . The first is an indifferently contoured woman with the usual hand on the usual breast; but on a small table behind her, and almost lost to sight, is what, on close inspection, might be recognized as a Chinese idol. The second represents two girls at table (a very poor work, although I believe it took some prize or other); no window, no rain, no clouds. The "fan" in Hildebrandt's picture is but one of the small accessories. The *Spring* canvas shows a woman indoors toying with some yellow flowers! . . . Such

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

senile childishness is all one with the spirit of our academicians. . . . Then there is the usual number of such time-worn titles as *Gone to Earth, Hills of the Muses, De Profundis* (an almost incredibly bad picture), *Veiled in Mist, Nature's Appeal,* and *Truth* by Kenyon Cox, an inept, incompetent and unconditionally ugly affair, judged even by the lowest academic standard—a second-hand remnant of the joyful Lefebvre and Bouguereau days. In every phase of the exhibition do we find manifested the somnolent, imitative mind of the academician, the mind which denies progress and originality, which battles desperately against all individual effort, which strives to hold the art of painting firmly affixed to the lesser standards of a defunct past.

Let us pass hurriedly through the list, picking here and there, taking the best along with the worst. Palmer's *The Archway* is a wholly negligible and uninteresting wood-and-snow scene whose only merit is that it might serve as a substitute for a photograph. Church's *The Peacock Girl* belongs to that cult of scraped, thin painting which was so much in vogue in academic London of eight years ago: the jury, no doubt, have their reasons for awarding it a prize. Jones's *An October Afternoon* is no more than a weak, devitalized Harpignies. Bohm's *The Promenade* combines an English inspiration with a Germanic execution—a hybrid which retains the worst qualities of both influences. Groll's *Sunset on the Desert* belongs to the well-known paint school of Southern California, with a dash of Turner. Gammell's *The Précieuse* is an anæmic offspring of Little Dutchmen parentage. Breckenridge's *Old China* seeks for an effect by the use of spuriously colored objects. Brown's *The Floe, Adirondacks* is a flat decoration of bilious color. Beal's *Rondout Creek* indicates that its author is not unaware of Monet. Cox's *Children of Richard Henry Dana, Esq.* are as lifeless as rag dolls. Caser's *American Landscape* gives evidence of that painter's slight feeling for decoration. Wendt's *California Coast* is flat and insensitive. Thorne's *Portrait of Mrs. Holland* is little better than the tinted, enlarged photographs to be seen in the windows of East Side family photographic galleries. Eaton's *Sentinel Pines* represents one of those pure green effects which, we have come to learn, stand for moonlight. Browne's *Life of*

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the Sea might possibly have found its way into the *Salon d'Automne* of ten years ago. Beal's *View from Healy's,* by the most charitable optimism, can be regarded only as a fair illustration. Coffin's *December Night* is a large expanse of flat, muddy blue dotted with white specks. Dufner's *Henrietta* is a figure piece, too free to be a portrait and too ungracious to be a picture.

Chase's *Miss Mary* contains some of the worst color it would be possible to set down. Any change whatever in this picture's inharmonic combinations would make for chromatic improvement. Bunce's *Evening, Venice* resembles a hundred other representations of Venice water-way scenes which every one has painted from Turner to Fournier: the acme of futility. Trotta's *Portrait of H. Davis* represents what is perhaps the most amateurish drawing that has been on view in New York this season. Eakins's *The Spinner* stems from the early, dark-brown Dutch Israels inspiration—a type of painting no longer audacious even in America. Beckwith's *Fame* is our old cartoon friend, the wreathed skull, which adorned the penny postcards years ago and was set upon the mantels in college dormitories. Such puerile ideas no doubt pass for philosophical art in the sanhedrin of Fifty-seventh Street. Basing's *On the Loing* introduces us once more to Corot. Henry's *A Village Street* is a weak imitation of Meissonier. Carlson's *Sylvan Labyrinths* is a clever bit of wood painting in a field where Diaz and Rousseau led the way. Turner's *Unwelcome News* takes us back to the days of the chromo, the hair-cloth sofa, the waxed flowers, and the wreath of wheat behind the plush-framed mirror. This picture is one with *Grandpa's Hat* and *Hunting for the Lost Stitch.* Bellows's *The Sawdust Trail* is a cleverly and superficially illustrated colloquialism. Higgins's *Bent Forms* is one of the best pictures in the exhibition, merely because it is simple and unpretentious and has been felt by the painter. Betts's *Portrait of Ben Foster* is another attempt to imitate Frans Hals—and another failure. Smedley's *Portrait, Miss C. B. R.* is a thin, commonplace picture of a woman dodging through a red curtain. I note that this canvas too won a prize.

Kendall's *Sphinx* brightens the atmosphere of the show with its unintended humor. It represents a naked "flapper" sitting

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

over a skeleton, and is no doubt intended to be savant and symbolic. Its philosophic significance escaped me, but not the poorness of its execution. When, I wonder, is painting going to rid itself of shop-girl literature? More literature is encountered in Ballin's allegorical *Cup of Life*. There is an influence of Titian here, although Ballin and the Renaissance master have nothing in common. The best picture in the exhibition (not awarded any prize) is Parshall's *No Man's Land*. Judged academically—and from no profounder standpoint—this is a well-done and solid picture, competent and well-felt. Seyffert's *Nude* is a second-rate academic figure, painted from an unusual position in order to attract attention. Turner's *Golden Hours* is among the best work in the show, demonstrating that women are as adept at the minor tricks of painting as are the men. The picture next to *Golden Hours* consists of a number of nudes on a gilded background. They are little drawings which the painter evidently fancied, and so placed them all haphazard into one picture. Church's *The Dance* is a decoration considerably inferior to the pictures on the walls of many New York rotisseries. Emmet's *Portrait of a Child* again instances woman's ability to carry away the laurels from the men at their own occupation. To appreciate fully Pearson's *By the River* one must be an ornithologist. It represents four birds, one perched on a limb; and its only value would lie in its accuracy of transcription. I will therefore leavé the judgment of it to the students of natural history.

Mora's *Fantasy of Goya* is a silly, inept piece of painting which makes an effort to imitate that execrable work entitled *Carpeau* which disgraces the walls of the Luxembourg Gallery. Dunton's *The War Signal* is but an echo of the deceased illustrator, Remington. Dufner, in *Summer Days,* achieves a lighting consistency, and his picture is not without superficial charm. Beal's *New York Freight Yards* would lose greatly beside Monet's *Gare St. Lazare*. Griffin's *Breton Fishing Village* is an indifferent example of the lump-paint school of strength. Unless Carlsen had named his picture *Moonlight On a Calm Sea* I would have mistaken it for a late afternoon piece. Evidently, however, the judges are better meteorologists than I am, for

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

they awarded the picture a prize. Weir's *A Follower of Grolier* is a brown, heavy and cumbersome drawing of a painter with a lyric talent, trying to approach Rembrandt and achieving a poor imitation of Sir Joshua Reynolds. Lawson's *Pigeon Coop* represents the usual stringy effect by this metallic Impressionist—another prize picture. Chase, also an Impressionist, shows us a still-life, *Fish,* which superficially recalls those gay days of 1830. But those early men felt their subjects and achieved solid painting, whereas Chase makes a husk of solidity with which to hoodwink the eye. The emotions, however, are not deceived. McLane's *Portrait of a Little Girl* is no more tactile than a piece of dough despite the "powerful" slashing manner of pigment application. Lever's *Dawn* reveals that painter's true talent. It is much better than his spuriously "modern" efforts in color —in fact, a good conscientious academic work in which all the rules of the art school are closely adhered to. Walter's *Brother and Sister* is only a piece of "effect" painting. Haupt's *Afternoon in the Garden* resembles early Friesekes and Millers. Frieseke's *The Hammock* gives us one of the pleasantest effects in the exhibition. Judge, therefore, the rest of the show when so thin and inconsequential a painter leads the way.

Howe's *Lowlands, Holland* is but another version of the familiar and ubiquitous cow-scape with which all commercial galleries are stocked for the Western trade. As an example of Franzen's originality let me state that his *Portrait* reveals the sitter holding his eyeglasses in one hand and an open book in the other. Nelson's Portrait of *Mrs. F. D. Bewley* is irredeemably bad; and it is difficult to believe that Haupt's *Early Morning* was not done by a first-year Art League pupil. Waugh's *The Blue Cascade* can best be described as a weakened Caro-Delvaille. Lie's *Winter Afternoon* typifies the familiar German snow scene. Saba's *The Red Kimono* is the best understood decorative figure in the show. Neilson's *Portrait of Miss M.* manages strangely to combine Howard Chandler Christy and Boldini. Stale English academism went into the making of Crisp's *The Strollers,* and won for that painter a prize. Niemeyer's *Procession of the Fontaine Blanche* would seem to be an aftermath of the recent exhibition of the French academicians

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

at Knoedlers, particularly of Lucien Simon. Eakins's *Portrait of J. Harry Lewis* is competent enough work of the commonplace kind; but a picture like Lascari's *Portrait of a Lady* has nothing to recommend it. The newspaper reviewers will no doubt mention the faraway romantic look in General Chamberlain's eyes in Sewell's *Portrait,* but, as a work of art, the picture is wholly indifferent. Davey's *Man and Monkey* is clever and talented in a popular way, but has no deeper qualities. . . .

There we have a representative list with the best pictures included! Apart from these already mentioned are a number so positively and aggressively worthless that no criticism can touch them; for instance, such pictures as Boston's *In an Old-Fashioned Gown,* Cornoyer's *Bryant Park, Winter,* Jones's *The Old Seat,* Farndon's *December,* Wiggins's *A Gleam of Sunlight,* Gay's *October Days,* Kline's *A Bit of Old Chartres,* Allen's *In the Eye of the Wind,* Beatty's *St. Sulspice, Lake Geneva,* Smillie's *Some Clouds and a Frog Pond,* Wiggins's *The Fields in November,* and Ochtman's *Big Warrior.*

But even judging the exhibition by the best work shown, it has nothing to recommend it. It is sterile and without life. One may search through the entire display without finding a trace of latent originality, an evidence of any preoccupation with the profound problems of art, an indication that the painter has progressed beyond the hard and ignorant rules of the primary schools of picture making. But in nearly every work there is a striving after an effect of some sort—a marshalling of all the artisan's little tricks to produce a certain surface, a flashing appeal, or a spurious charm which will momentarily attract. The whole show is on the par of a commodity with which to supply the market demand for worthless wall coverings. Of those men who have chosen painting as a business because the trade carries certain privileges, a fair income and a little prestige, I have nothing to say; but for those other second-rate men who set themselves up as authorities on æsthetic questions, who pose in the public eye as great artists and fight down all worthy modern effort, one can have only contempt.

Of late years, during the great struggle of the younger men to bring back into an effete and decadent art those elements

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

which make for the enduring quality of all living work, we have heard much from these conventional imitators in America, France and England. They have raised frantic appeals against the newer efforts, and have loudly bade us return to the good, the old, the traditional, the classic view of beauty, in order that "art" might be saved from the corrupting influences of modernity. And at the same time these men who are eternally warning us against letting go of the old forms are constantly giving us such exhibitions as the Academy show—exhibitions wherein there is not one quality that their beloved old masters considered of the slightest importance. The old masters deserve the name simply because, before they were allowed to paint, they had mastered the elements of their art; they understood the fundamental principles of æsthetic creation. But the modern decriers of the new work have never understood, even remotely, what those living elements were.

Kenyon Cox is the epitome of this ignorance. He fights the modern men and argues for the old; yet he is as innocent of the true merits of the one as of the other. A careful examination of his writings fails to reveal a single trace of knowledge concerning the ancient men whose work he acclaims. His painting, too, speaks eloquently of his ignorance of the older art. His own gods would be the first to ridicule and scorn his jejune efforts in paint. Like the majority of his fellow academicians, he mistakes the aspects of a painting for its basic worth.

For example, the school man argues that, because the older men used the object in nature to express their ideas in paint, representation was the sum total of their knowledge. Obviously this is an absurd fallacy. The first lesson which had to be learned by the painters of old dealt with composition. But composition, in its true sense, is never seen in an Academy show. The older men were also taught, through example and years of experiment, certain simple color harmonies. But the modern academician thinks that all color, if sufficiently muddied and neutralized, is harmonious, and that no two or three pure colors can possibly harmonize. The drawing of the older men was a question of sensitivity—a realization and experiencing of the form of the object before them, regardless of its exact photo-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

graphic delineations. But the modern school man, by means of tricks, constructs what he calls a good body. True, his drawing reminds us of a body, but there its worth ends. The realization of æsthetic form has never penetrated the academician's consciousness. He actually believes to this day that his method of drawing requires talent! An education such as our own academicians possess, completed in a few years like a course in book-binding, would have been beneath the contempt of painters of that day when art was looked upon as a serious pursuit and one worthy of a great man's devotion through life.

Such qualities as harmonic color relations, form which is felt tactilly, and interrelated and complex organizations, the modern academician has left for the younger men of new tendencies to explore. And these new men have attacked the problems with joy, even fanaticism, which is above praise. The progress they have made in the last century is evidence of what a profound reverence for art in the soul of the artist can accomplish in a short time. They have revived composition in its highest form, and in some instances have carried it further than the men of antiquity. To-day, thanks to these unspeakable young moderns, the problems of color are more clarified, more rationalized and used for higher æsthetic achievement than ever before in the history of the world. That the study of these elements should have led many painters astray is only natural. Not all those pioneers who go forth in quest of a new world come back with their hands laden with treasure. Some of them who are not worthy come back poorer than before. Others do not come back at all. But of the number that set forth in the face of sneers, sarcasm, ridicule and scoffing admonitions, many have opened up new fields, discovered new secrets, brought back knowledge that the satisfied trader in art, sitting comfortably at his easel in a kindergarten of painting, will never comprehend in a lifetime.

Let us not forget the anathema that Pissarro and his school called down upon themselves. Now even those same academicians who railed against the Impressionists make use of their methods. Impressionism has permeated even the most stubborn talent of the American schools to-day, just as it did in the schools

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of France fifteen years ago. To-day Cubism, another modern phase of painting which has done great good in more ways than one, has served its purpose—it is beginning to be felt even in the *Salon des Artistes Français!* When, I wonder, will it reach America? And see how the color in painting has brightened all over the world since Cézanne, Gauguin and Matisse came to drive the murky shadows from our great plastic method of pleasure!

The era is moving forward, and it has started a wave which is slowly, but with a force irresistible, engulfing the mental attitudes of our traditionalists. It is useless for them to struggle and cry out. Their voices can scarcely be heard in the joyous rebirth which is to give art a newer and greater lease of life, and which will change radically all forms of art in its train. We have seen what this spirit of penetration and desire for precision and profound knowledge has already done in music and poetry. It has reached even to advertising mediums, title pages and posters. It has led to reconstructions and a deeper knowledge of the dance along classic lines. Like all rebirths, it harks back to the best classic periods, takes from them what is greatest, analyzes their spirit, and with the knowledge thus garnered is inspired to create new forms. What Isadora Duncan is doing with the dance, the young painters are doing with composition. In all their best art one feels the struggle to dominate the old and to add something to it which the old overlooked. I have called Cézanne the artist who bridged the nineteenth century to the Renaissance; and he stands as a great example of the true modern who uses new methods and builds on old foundations. Furthermore, he was the road over which the men who have brought Cubism, Fauvism and Synchromism into being have gone back to solve anew the problems that were so well known in the days of Leonardo and Michelangelo.

The great fallacy of the academicians is that they mistake the painting of the seventeenth century and the Roman copies of Greek sculpture for the classic periods, and base their arguments on these periods alone. They seem never to have studied intelligently the great works of the old masters. They see in them only pretty faces and "atmosphere" and correct school

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

drawing. In short, they see in them the same unimportant qualities that the worst decadents of all great periods saw, and are content to be inspired by these second-rate works instead of going direct to nature. The academicians are the true decadents. When they achieve the likeness of a sitter, paint a silk dress so that it shines and glints, copy a landscape to resemble some old nineteenth-century so-called master or to resemble an amalgamation of several old masters, they are satisfied with the effect.

Decadence is the inability to create new tissue; and there is not one picture in the present exhibition which has not been done infinitely better by some long departed painter. There is no new tissue here—only inferior rehabilitations of men dead and buried. Yet, these modern academicians call the new men "decadents"—the new men who are adding each day some vital concept to painting! And the public and the critics, kneeling reverently beside the sunken corpse, echo, parrot-like, the appellation. The truth is, however, that *those very qualities in painting which the academician pretends to revere and defend are the animating factors in the art of the moderns; and it is the moderns, and not the academicians, who have adhered to the great principles of ancient painting.*

Fifteen years ago the life of the academicians was a tranquil and self-righteous stretch of lazy imitation, incompetent craftsmanship and large monetary returns. To-day they divide their time between working and declaiming against this "crazy stuff" which, did they know it, comes very much nearer the classic ideal they pretend to value so highly than do their own works. But now their returns are less: their sitters are more critical; and many men, seeing the honors and usufructs which go with this easy existence, have sprung up to share in the profits. Consequently the school men are eternally complaining and drivelling about the decay of art appreciation. But far from art appreciation decreasing, it is becoming more intelligent and widespread. For every person, who through reading or personal contact has come to admire the spirit of the newer men, some academician loses a client and goes under. If the decadent imitators will not heed the writing on the wall and mend their ways, they will be engulfed.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BUSINESS *vs.* SOCIALISM

CHARLES FERGUSON

IN a recent issue *The New York Call,* which is perhaps the most influential socialist newspaper in the country, prints on its editorial page a two-column article under the "display" heading: "The Riddle of the Socialist Universe." The writer is Mr. Joshua Wanhope, a socialist of marked lucidity, who is, I understand, one of the editors of *The Call.*

The purpose of the article is to show that the socialist movement in the United States, as in Europe, has been forced by events into a position of self-contradiction, from which it must extricate itself at short order, on peril of intellectual bankruptcy and political collapse. This emergency has been precipitated by the "preparedness" movement.

The socialist party is a peace party—absolute. Only a few months ago, by a referendum vote running more than fourteen to one, it amended its constitution to read: "Any member of the socialist party elected to an office who shall in any way vote to appropriate moneys for military and naval purposes or war, shall be expelled from the party."

Now, on the other hand, it is orthodox socialist doctrine, as everybody knows, that the capitalistic system as it exists in Europe and America commits the business-world to an international belligerency that necessarily tends toward war. Of course it is to be understood that the hope of socialists everywhere has been that their movement of universal pacification would out-run the belligerency of business, and that socialists would arrive at the high places of power in time to forestall a general military mobilization.

So long as socialists were able to entertain such a hope, there seemed to be no necessary contradiction between the two articles of the socialist creed. They could, with a good conscience and without prejudice to patriotism, go on saying in one breath, first, that capitalism makes war, and second, that socialists must not have anything to do with the fighting. But now that hope has been cancelled out in Europe. And in the United States also

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

it seems to have departed from the minds of intelligent socialists, such as Mr. Wanhope. Since American socialists, like their confreres in Germany, France and England, have no notion of separating their party from their country, they are now brought face to face with a staggering contradiction.

How now can they say that capitalism is drawing their country swiftly toward violent collision with foreign states—and say also that they will do nothing to defend her? That is an impossible position. When the menace of war stood far off, it was possible to declare that socialism was a sufficient shield to ward away the danger. But now the danger is near. Socialists are driven to confess that the socialist shield is not yet ready, nor will it be soon. It will take much time. And the peril will not wait. Socialists like Mr. Wanhope are brave and honest enough to admit that they are bewildered.

Shall they recant their pacific doctrine and turn in to help the country arm, as Mr. Charles Edward Russell advises? At that price they can purchase the right to say: "We told you so. We were the first to warn the world of the danger of universal shipwreck, and of the need to be prepared."

Shall they on the contrary hold fast to the gospel of peace, renouncing their seemingly proved and seasoned theory of the war-ward drift of modern business?

Or is there some *tertium quid,* some high Hegelian synthesis that can lift them out of their dilemma?

The case is exigent. There is no time to lose. Mr. Wanhope hangs out his signal of magnanimous distress. There is no unmanly flinching, nor any false shame. He declares that the present position of the socialist party "cannot stand the test of reality," and that if no better position can be found the party will "have to acknowledge a stale-mate, and acknowledge that the Gordian knot cannot be cut by us." Again he says: "Who can formulate a solution . . . that is practicable, a position that can be reasonably and consistently maintained? He will be the master-mind of the socialist movement of America—nay, of the world."

As an outsider, ineligible to that great award, I venture to offer a few well-considered aids to reflection, which if rightly

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

used may have power in them to save what is true and social in socialism.

I submit the following propositions:

In all countries that derive their ostensible governments from the ballot-box, the modern business system is the predominant force in politics. I mean of course the system based on capital, credit, contract and corporate organization, in and through which nearly everybody nowadays does his day's work and makes his living. And the point is that *the working-order has become much stronger than the voting-order.*

The sufficient reason why this business-system has not been voted out of existence by socialists, is that it has always been able to identify its interests with *the short-run interests* of a majority of the voters. In the nature of things this must continue to be the case. There is no prospect that majorities will anywhere, or at any time in the near future, acquire spiritual or economic strength enough to sacrifice, by one tremendous act of social vision and valor, the bird in the hand for the two in the bush. The worse the system, the harder it is for the mass of the people to take any sweeping political action against it. The development, within the last two or three generations, of this delicate, powerful and all-comprehensive working-organization has about it a kind of fatality or finality that must be faced. The vain attempt to vote the business-system out of existence ought to be given up.

Whatever may be the case under a military autocracy, the fact remains that in democratic countries the existing organization of industry and commerce—or something like it—is going to continue for an indefinite period to attach to itself the fortunes of a majority, and is going to control the government. Socialism, so far as it undertakes to overrule the business-system by the massing of votes, is indeed something less than a stale-mate.

But it does not follow that the spirit and purpose of socialism—its insistence upon the socializing of the economic process and the abolition of privilege—must be given up. On the contrary, this spirit or purpose will, I am confident, escape from its

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

present bafflement and bewilderment, *on the day that socialists quit trying to vote the business-system out.*

The thing to do is to make terms with reality. Socialists should accept the inexpugnable fact that the fortunes of the majority are bound up in the business system—and they should undertake *to socialize the system.* There is really nothing else to do, since the working-organization has so completely conquered and subjugated the voting-organization.

Socialists are right in saying that, as it stands, the business-system is belligerent and commits the nations to war. They are wrong if they persist in saying that the system cannot be reformed and made social, or if they fail to perceive that its present belligerent and unsocial character violates its own constitution. The fact is that the business-system must be regarded as unbusinesslike, unscientific and self-contradictory—until it ceases to be belligerent and becomes the agency of a community-of-interest, crossing class-lines and political frontiers.

Thus Mr. Wanhope's riddle, and its solution, narrows down to this: By what strategy of revival and reform may the socialists hope to restore our belligerent business-system to its "constitution of peace"? If such a programme can be framed, socialists can go on saying that the actual tendency of the business-system is warward; but that they are all for peace, and *are determined to turn the tendency the other way.* Thus socialism can be saved from the maw of the sphinx. And the intellectual integrity of socialists will be vindicated.

In considering such a programme, first let it be observed that a working-system accepted by most men as a thing of natural justice, but which does in fact breed war between classes and nations, must have in it some hidden spring of perversity that needs a searching eye to see. The presumption is raised that the system may be all right in its ground-plan, *but is not working normally.* And that, I submit, will turn out to be the acknowledged fact.

The ground-plan of the business-system is not being carried out. The warward drift is a suicidal tendency that runs counter to the constitutional principles of industry and trade, as

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

understood and approved by honest men. Certainly most people cannot see that the system as it stands is framed to harbor privilege. On the contrary, it seems to them to be an admirable scheme for releasing the productive forces of society, and giving to each man place and promotion according to his power to "deliver the goods." *Thus the rectification of the system will simply bring to reality a state of affairs that the mass of casual and unobservant men suppose actually to exist.*

It will then be discovered that this modern social order of capital, credit, contract and corporations—compared with the various imperial, parliamentary and feudalistic systems of social coördination and control—*is the only form so far known to history that is absolutely unamenable to privilege.* You can put privilege into any of the more ancient forms of social-control without destroying them; they may last comfortably enough for centuries. But you cannot put privilege into the modern business-system without throwing it into convulsions—commercial panics of increasing violence and exhaustion, bitter class-struggles, ferocious foreign wars. The modern business-system, when infected with monopoly, loses its natural shape and poise, and can find no stable footing. In a vain effort to recover its equilibrium it strives forward through misfortune to disaster, and cannot rest until it has involved the whole world in unparalleled calamity.

The war-ward tendency of business is a violent distemper—like that of a Texan steer that has eaten the locoweed. The socialists, who were first to discover this tendency, should also have been first to see that the belligerency of the business-system is not constitutional to it—that it is a disease, a curable disease. Rightly considered, it is a compliment to any human institution that it goes mad when you put privilege into it.

So the programme of social recuperation must find the most vital organ of business and propose a régime of health for it. Socialists have generally failed to locate this most vital organ because they have thought about the social disease in terms that are more than fifty years behind the times. Thus in branding the bad thing as "capitalism" they have wholly missed the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

point. It is not capitalism that is the matter with us. The evil is not in private initiative, private property in tools, or personal and non-official control of great industries. The truth is that the capitalist, as ruler of society, is almost as archaic as the landlord. No longer as the mere owner of land or of tools may one reach the place of highest power. The sovereignty of modern business lies in the control of industry and commerce through the administration of credit.

They who have power to give or withhold financial power, in whose hands it is to decide what wheels shall turn and what wheels shall not turn, and who are able to give every man his rating in the market-place—they are the masters of politics; and by our default of social sense for the ordering of social processes, they are the rulers of the modern world. These private administrators of social credit can bring to naught the most excellent social arrangements. It is in their power, for example, to take the tools away from millionaire tool-owners. And such a thing as the "single tax" need not cause them a qualm, *since they alone could pay the rents and dispose of the public revenues.*

Imagine a state—say the state of California—in which landlordism had ceased to exist through the public appropriation of all "economic" rents, in accordance with the Henry George formula. Then imagine the abolishment of all capitalism also, by "act of God," some greater San Francisco fire and earthquake that had swept away the whole material equipment of productive enterprise throughout the state. Society would then be thrown back upon *its immaterial equipment*—upon the complex of creative capabilities, of technical and scientific talents, which is the historical heritage of the people of the state of California. Let it be noted that these "incorporeal hereditaments"—this immaterial equipment—is the quintessence of all economic and political power. It is the stuff out of which all material wealth is made. *And the power to put the immaterial equipment of a people in array—or in disarray—is the ultimate definition of social authority.*

In the case supposed, therefore, the immaterial equipment

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

would be sufficient for the restoration of the apparatus of civilization—food, clothes, housing, the means of transportation and so on. The practical question would be, How is this equipment to be composed and assembled? Individuals in isolation could do next to nothing toward restoring the apparatus of civilization. The problem would be to effect the social correlations necessary for the re-creation of ranches, mines, mills, etc.

Now as things stand in the mentality and habit of the United States, our devastated California could re-establish its necessary correlations in only one way. Let us see what that way would be:

Capitalists—i. e., the owners of tools and productive materials—would have nothing to say about it; for there would be no tools and materials, and consequently no such ownership, and no capitalists. Landlords would be out of the reckoning also—by grace of Henry George.

Does anybody suppose, therefore, that Californian society would start fresh and free, that it would be delivered from old habitual task-masters and from the yoke of privilege? Is there any likelihood that its farmers, mechanics, chemists, artists, engineers and industrial organizers would conspire together in local communities, saying to one another: We have in our own minds and bodies the immaterial equipment of civilization, out of which a new and sufficient material equipment can be created in a year, or two or three. If at first we need corn or clothes and a shovel or two—or even a gang-plough or a mining plant—such things can be got from our neighbors to the Eastward, *on the security of these same incorporeal values which are the basis of all wealth.* Let us establish new credit-centres, for the administration of a rousing finance that shall put every man on his mettle, and really make things move. *Let all of us back the notes of each one of us—in proportion to his delivery of the goods.*

That would be a business-like arrangement and a sensible thing to do. But who that has observed and reflected upon the tortuous mentality of modern business communities, can suppose that anything so business-like and sensible would actually be done? No, it may be said with confidence that in such a case as that supposed it would hardly occur to the business-communi-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ties of California to improvise banks or credit-centres devoted frankly to the production of goods. The reason is that Californians, like other Americans, are accustomed to do business from credit-centres that are operated in the interest of a creditor-class. And the idea of working a bank for the building of a town or the raising of the living-standard would be regarded as "very fine for the millennium," but for present and practical purposes, altogether visionary.

The plain fact is that in all matters relating to large-scale production and distribution of goods, our modes of action and habits of thought have been adjusted to an impersonal and complicated custom of peonage. It is difficult for us to conceive of an economic enterprise as being instituted by others than the people to whom the community owes money, or as being prosecuted for any other purpose than the increase of the community's debt to such people. Thus our unfortunate Californians must not be expected to understand that all the intrinsic powers of modern finance are lodged in their own bodies. Their mechanics, engineers and industrial organizers have not acquired the habit of getting together on their own account for financial purposes. They lie under the general persuasion that finance begins with having a lot of money, and ends in an inscrutable mystery that no layman should hope to fathom. Therefore the thing that the Californians would actually do in the face of their emergency, is this:

They would resort to certain leisurely and sedentary persons called bankers—persons generally quite unapt and uninterested in the out-door processes whereby the earth is subdued and cities built, and skilled only in the processes whereby the claims of creditors are fastened upon the apparatus of civilization. These persons, acting as curators and trustees of the creditor-class, would have in their strong-boxes certificates of indebtedness against society at large. Or if the documents had been lost their substance would persist in memory, and could be proved in court. It is upon these debt-certificates and the memory of claims against tools and materials that had ceased to exist, that the new fabric of Californian civilization would be constituted. Yes, it is true. So far as any reconstructive operations on a

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

considerable scale were concerned, the ranchers, mechanics, engineers and industrial organizers would twirl their fingers and kick their heels in bewilderment—*until the trustees of their creditors should say: Go on.*

So now—having effected for our Californians this dubious deliverance from their imaginary plight—let us return to the riddle of the socialists with a fresh affirmation of the truth that neither the landlord nor the capitalist is ruler of the modern world, that the working organization or business-system is the predominant force in modern politics and that the most vital function of business is finance—the administration of credit. My point is that *socialists have a fighting-chance to stop the warward tendency of business, by moving for the socialization of finance and the abolishment of the hampering and destructive peonage that is the central absurdity of the existing social order.*

The class-struggle is not due to free competition in industry or to the principle of private enterprise; it is due to private appropriation of the most public of all social offices—the administration of credit.

A study of the mechanism of modern banking should yield appreciation of the fact that now-a-days banks control commerce as well as credit, since the bank by its discount arrangements virtually buys the goods from the seller and sells them to the buyer. The marketing of goods is indeed part of the credit-process. *The monopoly of credit and the monopoly of commerce are one and the same thing.* Consequently the socialization of credit must include the social control of the market. We arrive therefore at the conclusion that the programme of a regenerated socialism should be *the emancipation of personal enterprise in all the avenues of production, through the establishment of new social centres of credit, for the control of commerce and finance.*

The class-antagonism rises wholly out of the fact that the voltage of enterprise is abnormally low even in times of "prosperity." The volume of enterprise is not sufficient to absorb more than a fraction of the working-forces of society. The existence of an unemployed class must perforce reduce the whole

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

body of wage-workers to a condition of servile dependence, mitigated by labor-organization and perpetual class-war. *The social problem is to be solved by raising up in every community a social institution of credit and commerce, strong enough to check and cancel out the struggle for wage-lowering and price-raising power, and to turn the whole volume of social energy into an intense rivalry and competition for value-producing power.*

The rise of the modern credit system has so unsettled and fluidized the one-time solid estates of landlord, capitalist and money-lender, that a great social change releasing the fettered hands of the producers of real values, can now be accomplished with astonishing swiftness and ease. Indeed, as a civilized man, concerned with the maintenance of order and social continuity, one might hesitate to explain to a restless public the simplicity of the method whereby financial control may be made to change hands—were it not for the fact that only men of valor and worth can possibly turn the trick.

The modern business-system is a social order that works so close to chemistry and physics and the elemental laws of human nature that the leverage of its control in every community *gravitates to the strongest group that stands ready to receive it.* If in the United States to-day this control is generally exercised by groups of men whose strength is mercantile and mercenary rather than social and scientific, it is because such men are most representative of the actual American public, and *because the men of social and scientific ability are not yet grouped.* In any community that can develop a social centre devoted to the practical arts and the raising of the standard of living, the power of finance and the control of business can be made to pass, in a matter of months or weeks, out of the hands of manipulators and promoters, and into the hands that are fitter to receive it. Such a transition is now being accomplished on a large scale in Europe, in all the countries that have been taught by war the social feebleness and futility of plutocratic finance.

If socialists are to turn their attention to this transplacement of the credit-centre, they must of course become more social. They must stop fighting for a class and must fight for society. They must set up a militant standard of art and science

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

—the standard of the university and the public school—and must rally to it all the people of every class who want to do better work as well as get better pay, and who are able to take a direct emotional interest in civilization.

But there are socialists that will say: All that is too fine for the facts. The unsocial forces press too hard. The battle for life on the part of the oppressed and disinherited is too fierce. Labor cannot stand for civilization and better workmanship until the exploiters yield ground. As things stand there is no elbow-room for social service and science.

Well, let it be granted then that the fight for the life of labor is as hard as the fight now waged by Germany or France. Yet these manage to clear a space for civilization—behind the lines. The socialists in America can do so. It is a matter of strategy and discipline.

Thus the strategy of the fight for a social socialism may require that socialists give a part of their energy to the backing up of organized labor. The labor movement, with its grim struggle for living-wages and a little chance to think, may be considered as *a battle-line, holding the frontier of the new democratic society*. But behind that cordon *there should be free spaces worth fighting for—a fair land with green fields, and the rising towers of the capital of a new country that can be loved.*

If the socialists would set their hands to the building of that city, they would escape from the devouring sphinx. They would not even be stale-mated.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED